

LESBIAN • CONTRADICTION

A Journal of Irreverent Feminism

Issue #40, Fall 1992

\$2.00

By and for Women

ELECTION REFLECTIONS:



"I guess we should have paid more attention to what the Supreme Court was up to."

DEL MARTIN &
PHYLLIS LYON,
AMY BLAKE,
JAN ADAMS

write on the
ritual at the polls

ALSO:

MORE ON
SEX & GENDER

A LATINA'S
THOUGHTS ON
MUSIC
FESTIVALS

...AND
LOTS OF
COMICS!

EXTRA! LESCON CENSORED IN TEXAS! See page 13

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Women's Music Festivals — "Tierra Enfurecida"

by tatiana de la tierra

My dreams are infested with women's festivals. They provide the backdrop to the tortured emotional, sexual and spiritual meanderings I engage in when I sleep. I discovered myself in a lesbian way while I traveled around the U.S. in my blue bug seven years ago, using women's music festivals as a framework to my itinerary. At the same time, I explored what being a Columbian born lesbian meant in the context of these gatherings.

I grew up in Miami as a "resident alien." I spent years rejecting my latin self and then more years reclaiming my culture. I hated "americans." During my discovery drive, I practically hummed "oh beautiful for spacious skies..." as I experienced the Painted Desert in Arizona, the Native American power in Montana, the Badlands of South Dakota and the Valley of Fires in New Mexico.

What really overpowered me, though were the women's music festivals. I went to seven of them in one summer. I met my first total butch dyke and was fascinated with rowdy, hairy, witchy naked women in the woods. I encountered the term "woman of color," thought most "women's music" was boring, and at some point noticed that the latina presence in these spaces was scant. That's when the magic wore off. By then my latin culture was my guide and the focus of my energy.

I noted my point of intolerance during the last Michigan Womyn's Music Festival I went to in '86. For hours before arriving at the gate my car was filled with male Columbian music. I pumped myself up with cumbias, bambucos, and vallenatos. I frantically wanted to overdose myself with what I wouldn't have. That year there were no token latina acts featured. I rushed out of there early, in time to make it to NYC for a Mercedes Sosa concert, a 16 hour drive I didn't regret. Mercedes took my heart in the palm of her hand and stroked it for hours.

I went to music festivals to groove and debate and be a part of an experimental lesbian space. Yet attending an event that has no interest in attracting me as a latina is hypocritical. It's not that I'm stuck

in an idyllic mode. It's just that I am aware of the cultural imposition and my presence endorses it. Wearing a bitter/angry/resentful attitude becomes old. I want to participate, but why should I? I stopped going to women's music festivals, but I haven't stopped complaining or dreaming about them.

Latina lesbian presence has never been a priority in the women's music festivals or in the dominant white North American lesbian culture. Latinas in the U.S. are not well integrated with "women of color" or the mainstream latin community. We are not always easily detected and we have no national voice. It's easy to wonder where we are, yet there are dozens of latin lesbian and gay organizations in the U.S. and in Latin America.

One glaring characteristic of women's festivals is the virtual absence of latin culture. Producers like to say that they don't know any latin women who write/sing/perform/politicize or would partake in a lesbian-rich setting. I know many! Whether they would care to participate in institutions that have not included us from the outset and have isolated us across the years is another issue. Establishing connections with latin women may require extraordinary effort. You might even have to go out of your way. I dug deep to cultivate links with latin women because it was essential to me. The women in control have not given latin women such importance.

Latin culture is "in" today. Hollywood has invested in the latin appeal, responding to the phenomenon quicker than supposedly progressive lesbians. What's been going down for decades all over is now a novelty. The accents are fascinating, the food is exotic, the music is pelvic, the rhythm is attainable, the people are oh, so, so passionate. North Americans have, practically at gun point, begun to culturally notice the bulging latin population in their own back yard.

So where is the lesbian interest in latin women? Over the years it's been a here and there situation without any major effort or success. Besides the "we can't find them" concept is the "there's not a market for latin music" one. I would prefer a "we're not that interested" response. It feels more honest. You never know if there's a market for something until you properly present it. This year's Michigan festival will include workshops on salsa, creative writing, and "celebrating our differences" by latin women. This smattering is progress. I even contemplated going, but I won't. It's not good enough.

I'll be at the third Latin American & Caribbean Lesbian Feminist Encuentro in Puerto Rico, which occurs with the dates conflicting with those of the Michigan festival. A few women wonder why the organizers chose

dates that compete with the oldest and largest lesbian institution in the U.S. It didn't occur to them to take Michigan into consideration. After all, they've never truly taken us into consideration. Things can change, but, as of now, they haven't. Until they do, my women's music festivals will remain in my dreams. ♦

tatiana de la tierra is one of the editors of the national latina lesbian magazine, ESTO NO TIENE NOMBRE. ESTO is a quarterly charging \$15 a year for subscriptions. Write 4700 NW 7th Street #463, Miami, FL 33126.

Note: The creatures illustrating tatiana's article come from not from Colombia, but from Mexico. They are designs from clay stamps collected by Jorge Enciso and appearing in a Dover book called *Design Motifs of Ancient Mexico*.

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Womyn's Braille Press, Inc.,
PO Box 8475, Minneapolis, MN 55408**

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Thanks!

Many thanks to the diligent crew who helped mail issue 39: Jean Taylor, Suzy Gordon, Lauren Webster (and Emma), Ruth Warner (and Diego), Gen Howe, Kelly Love, Gina Hakiello, Kane L. Ellen, Alicia McCarthy, Julie Stroud, Lisa Heezen, Millie Thayer, and Micol Seigel. ♦

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A Journal of Irreverent Feminism

Published quarterly in March, June, September and December.

Deadline for next issue: October 15, 1992

Deadline for issue 42: January 15, 1993

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Subscription to *LesCon* costs \$6 per year (more if you can, please; free to women in jail, in prison, or otherwise locked up). Sample copy is \$1.50. A year's subscription to *LesCon* entitles you to four issues delivered in plain brown wrappers, and to the privilege of requesting free samples for as many friends as you like. Because *LesCon* is produced by and for women, we ask that men not request subscriptions.

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SUBMISSIONS: *LesCon* welcomes women's graphics and writing (no poetry or fiction, please) which reflect a feminist commitment to the empowerment of all women. Specifically, *LesCon* exists to provide a place for women to share challenging and controversial ideas, lively humor, and an increasing awareness of and respect for the diversity of women.

Writers, artists and other interested women are encouraged to write to request a copy of the *LesCon* Contributors' Guidelines. You're welcome to send a two- or

three-line author's bio along with your work. Please include your name and address with everything you send to *LesCon*; we don't insist on printing your name with your work, but we do have to be able to get in touch with you.

Because *LesCon* has such limited space and because we only appear quarterly, we ask that women not send work to *LesCon* that may appear, or has already appeared, in other nationally distributed papers!

POLITICS: *LesCon* is produced on a collective, consensus, volunteer basis by a small group of lesbian feminists who disagree on as many things as we agree on. We do not agree with all opinions expressed in *LesCon* by individual authors, but we accept responsibility for choosing to print everything in the paper. Although we have created *LesCon* with a pretty clear idea of what we want this journal to be, we also see it as an experiment — an ongoing opportunity for all of us, readers and editors, to learn more about ourselves, each other, and the many truths of feminism.

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Our mailing address is:

***LesCon*, 584 Castro St., #263, San Francisco, CA 94114**

EDITORS: Jan Adams, Angie Fa, Rebecca Gordon

Response

Notes on Lesbian Camp

by A. Bragdon Gilley

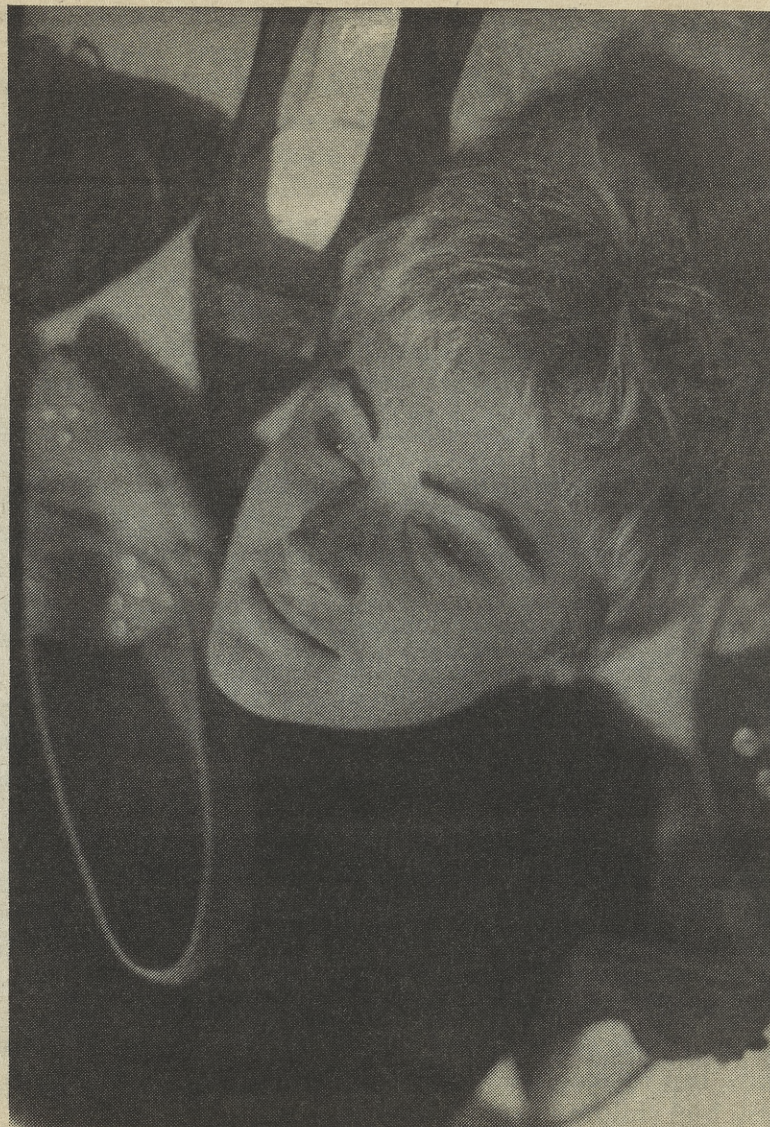
Are people ever confused about my gender?

St. Patrick's Day drunks who loudly debate my gender/sex. Teenagers on the Greyhound bus who lose their bet when I turn and say that no, I am a woman. A four-year-old boy who panics when his mother cannot answer when he asks her if I am a boy or a girl. The man in the gay bar who openly cruises me. Perhaps he thought I was a TV — I was in full femme gear. Or perhaps as my costume designer friends say, I am guilty of not providing enough signals.

And yes, I insist on the confusion. My sister refuses to believe that these episodes actually occur. She insists that I have a feminine face and figure — you know, curves and jewelry in the correct places. Never bound in high heels, I walk with a conscious, an exaggerated athletic lope. And I dress in loose men's sweaters, faded levis, t-shirts and dress shirts. But this menswear is part of an attitude, a play, a camp. Lesbian camp. Costume is my weapon for today; and to confound and to confuse is my mission. Camp attitude begins with the gathering and

// Costume is my weapon for today; and to confound and to confuse is my mission. //

rearrangement of form and shape, of line and color, fabric and footwear. A form worn with true attitude. Consider loose faded jeans worn with an unpressed white dress shirt, acid orange Converse high-tops with silver rings on each finger and long silver earrings from each earlobe. Worn with a swagger and a vintage Grace Kelly handbag in green. No femme cinched waist. The monochromatic street punk, the elegant self-indulgent jewelry all suggest that the conscious assumption of clothes is not a fashion statement, not a careless gesture, but a flaunting of costume. The line of the macho masculine shirt and jeans as broken by the swaying earrings and the feminine twist of the hips is hidden by the jock stride impelled by the sneakers. And what about the handbag carelessly tucked under the left arm and the right hand



The author: does she give enough signals?

swinging the string bag filled with brown rice, organic carrots and soymilk cartons?

Oh I forgot about socks. Never wear nylons and men's dress socks last longer and cost less even if you cannot find electric red socks.

The definition of lesbian drag: reconciling humor and anger through the irreverent use of accessories. ♦

A. Bragdon Gilley holds a Ph.D. from U.C. Santa Barbara. She is a lesbian cartoonist/novelist who believes that infiltrating pop culture is the only path to revolution. She is working on the Sarah Soo diaries — a novel of a lesbian private eye/performance artist.

TERRY FINDS HER CELERY BOUNDARIES BEING STRETCHED



Leslie Z.

Responses

Girl Grows Up, Becomes Witch

by Henrietta Bensussen

I grew up during the 1950's. In those days, everyone knew who was a woman and who wasn't. Women were married, had children, had hair, wore skirts and makeup. Women were defined by the men they were attached to: their husbands, or if not yet married, their fathers or their brothers. To be a mature woman was to be a married woman. Otherwise you were a girl or an Old Maid.

The Old Maid in our neighborhood was tall, skinny and lived with her father. She answered lonely hearts ads, and met men in town for lunch, then reported what happened to my mother. She was 32.

I was going to be a woman when girlhood was over. The pressures put on me by my mother to be one was unrelenting. And so it came about that I did meet a boy, who asked me to marry him, and we did, and I was 18, and I was not going to college after all, but was working as a file clerk, and I was a mature woman.

When the Sixties happened, I felt a little jealous. By then, we had two children and I was still in clerical jobs. We had a house in suburbia and I had a little garden, and we didn't have much money. I was very mature and a good mother. I wasn't doing too well as a wife, however, but mature women didn't get divorced. I made friends with the women I worked with. They smoked pot, made pots, had hair. The men did the same. It was getting hard to tell from the outside who was male and female, but you could usually tell who was a mature woman, because she still had children around her.

In the Seventies I finished college, with a degree in Biology. Then I went back to work, as a secretary. But I knew a lot more about gardens and plants. I began to be less mature. I became adventurous. I wore jeans to the office. I was criticized by my supervisor. I found a better secretarial job. By the early Eighties, my daughter had finished college; my son was just beginning. I left home. I ditched maturity in the quest for enlightenment. I was neither girl nor maid, but lesbian.

My first relationship was with Pat (not her real name). She had beautiful, soft skin, soft curly hair, amorous eyes, and a smooth, low voice. She was taller and a lot more rounder than me. She had a lot of self-confidence, but her self-esteem was iffy. It came out in odd ways.

What finally came out, in the middle of the night, amid sobbing confessional tears, was that she was a transsexual. What's a new lesbian to do? I felt chagrined. How ironic, I thought, that my first lesbian love affair is with a former man. Can't you even tell? I berated myself. But no, I couldn't. Pat didn't look like any man I'd ever seen, and I had seen a few. She had all the womanly features women were supposed to have. She was certainly as emotional as a woman, too, but her expectations were different. That was the real clue. She *expected* to be treated like a human being. We women did not.

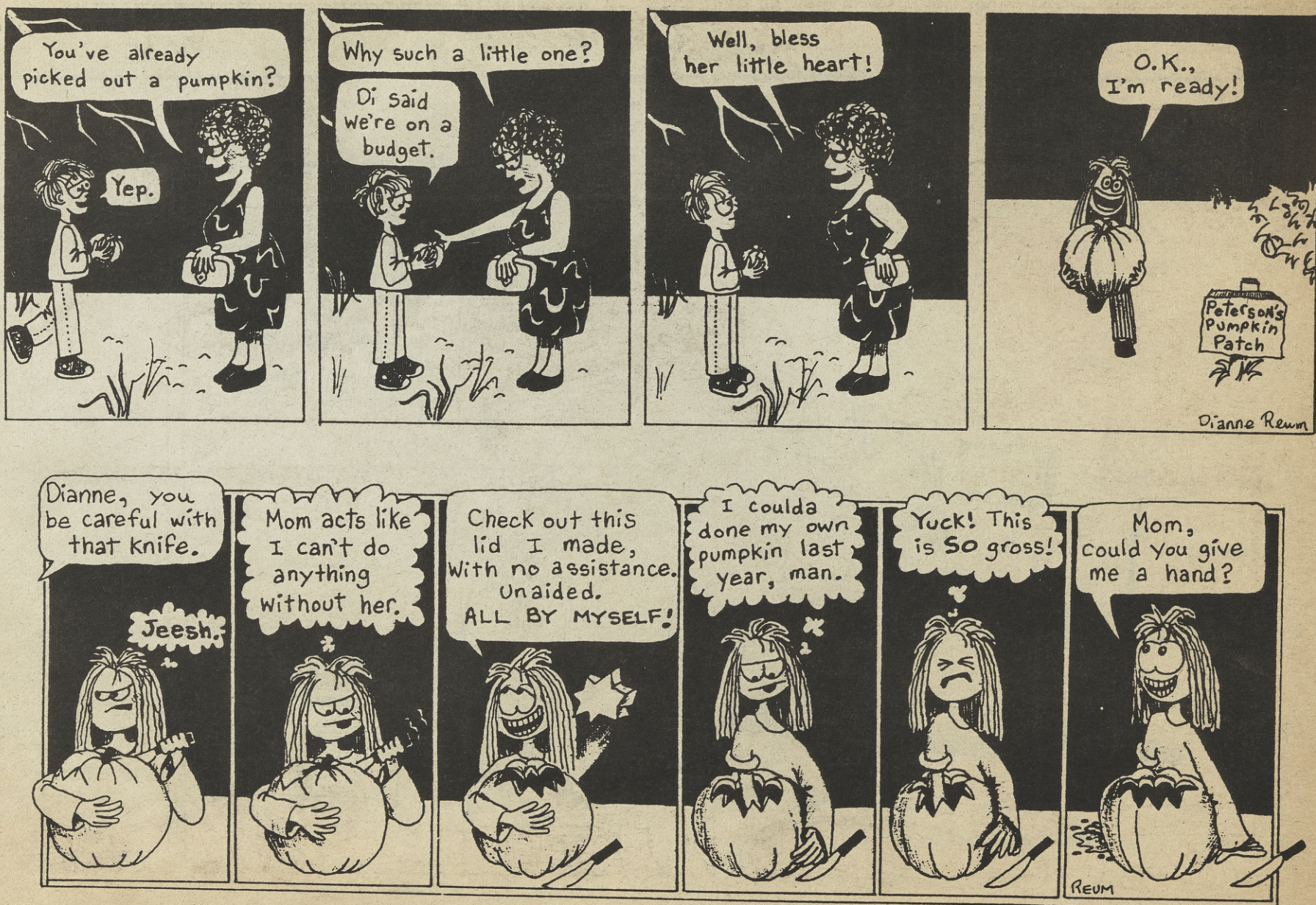
//She expected to be treated like a human being. We women did not.//

We women were being constantly turned into actresses in pornographic scenes by male directors of our lives: our bosses, the newscasters on TV, the disk jockeys on the radio stations, the guys on the street, any man in a group of men, or any man who looked at us. Pat was proud of her new body and whipped off her clothes for any legitimate reason. I was always trying to keep mine covered up. Pat enjoyed being a girl because she was in charge of the script. I had been socialized to give up control. I was like the black man told to keep back and out of sight.

Lately, I've discovered another fact of life as an older lesbian. Witch power. My boss doesn't like to get too close to me, and definitely doesn't like me to talk in meetings. When I ask a question or give a comment, he'll immediately respond by saying it's time to close. He stays at least three feet away when he has to talk to me. It's the clean factor. An older woman is not as clean as a younger one. Men can catch dangerous things from an older woman. It sets us apart.

Each year I get a little more witch power. I figure things out for myself and come to my own conclusions. My garden becomes filled with vibrant flowers. I become more independent. Save a little more money in my mutual stock funds. Become a little less patient. ♦

*Henrietta Bensussen is an older lesbian who edits **Entre Nous**, a monthly lesbian newsletter, does a lot of gardening, works as a secretary, and writes her experience. Future plans call for a move to Oregon and establishing a business in herbs. She shares her life with Linda and their two cats.*



Human or Ape?

by Ann Nemesis

Transsexuals think about how they know the experience of the other sex. They are trapped in the wrong body. From childhood they have had the inner sense that their physical existence is "wrong." Chromosomes do not define gender or sex, they say. Their perception gives me hope, for I have a more fantastic story: I am an orangutan trapped in a human body! Those of you who scoff at me, you are victims of your limited imaginations. If the divine can err by reincarnating some into the wrong gender, certainly the deity can err in assignments of species.

As a child I remember the sense that my arms are longer than natural for the human ape. My mother, the able seamstress, silently added two inches of fabric to the shirts she made for me. Few others are aware of this deformity I have lived with all my life.

My favorite toy: the monkey bars. Closing my eyes, visions of swinging effortlessly through the jungle treetops assailed me. On the monkey bars I'd swing, but something was wrong. This human butt would not gracefully swing me up to the top bar. There was no tail with prehensile strength to give me the last boost.

I distinctly remember howling and hooting like the great ape after seeing Tarzan films. My sisters graciously played the parts of Tarzan and Jane. They had no interest in the thought of being covered in fur and looking the "ugly" ape. My father, annoyed by the din coming from our room, now jungle, yelled, "Quit yer monkeyin' around!" We all knew it was me he was talking to.

On Sundays when the family went to Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo, I became lost in fascination at the monkey house. My family was not surprised, though they said nothing. They circled around to the other exhibits and picked me up on the way out. As for me, here was home. I understand the language of the apes, our desperation at being trapped in this human zoo. The bars of the cages and the city keep us from our true wild home.

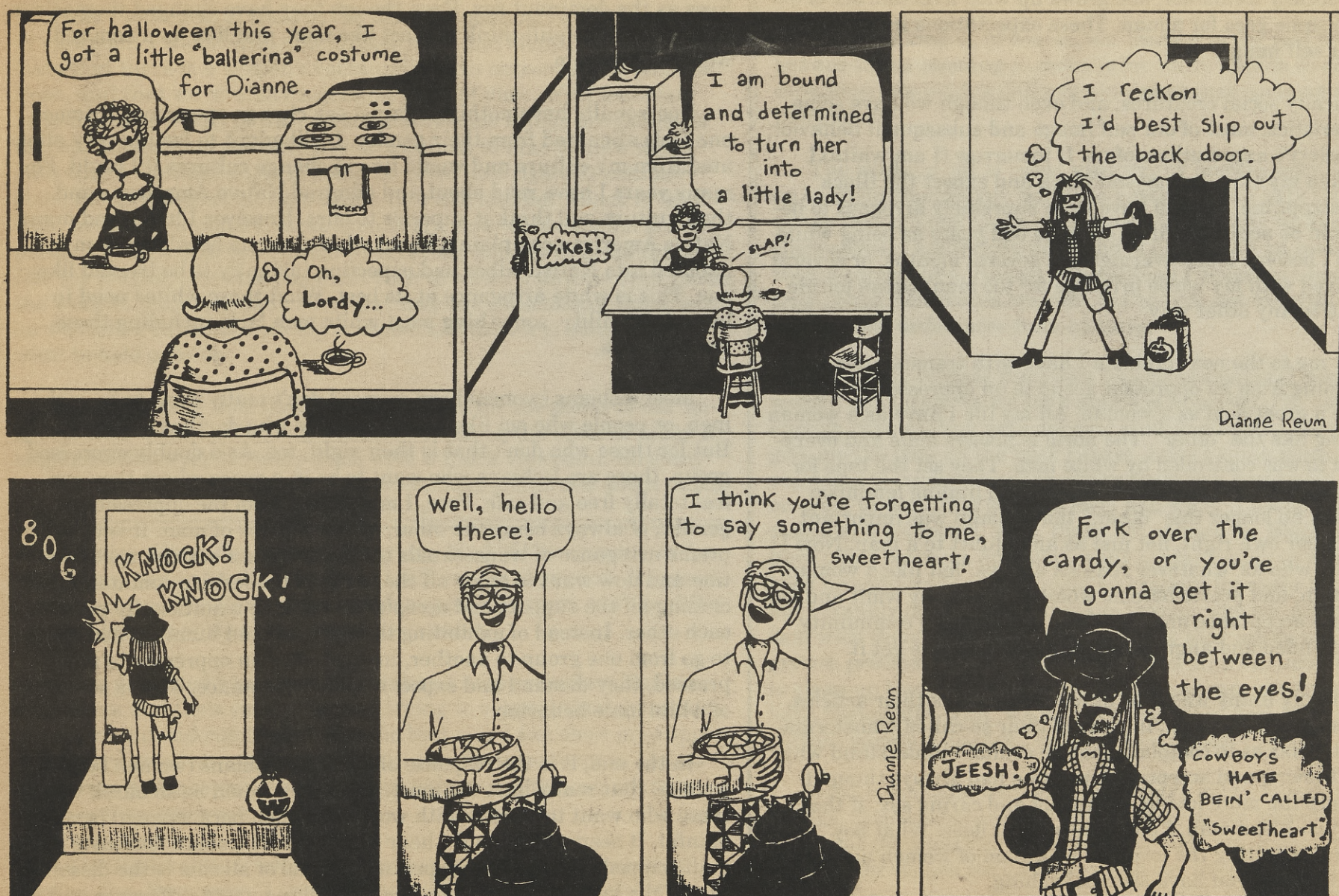
Still, these experiences washed over me only as a patina of sadness which I thought was normal for a child. I knew I was different, but it was a nameless difference which I thought was my individuality. Then I was taken to another zoo. There I came in contact with a full understanding of my dilemma. A kindly zookeeper was holding in her arms the newest addition to the zoo, a baby orangutan. If only I could trans-

late to you my inmost experience on meeting this tyke! The glorious thin red hair! The huge soulful brown eyes! The long arms! The thin wide mouth! I was rapt with joy. Here was one of my own. These human babies, their baldness, their timidity and slowness of growth. They don't look right to me. This red orangutan. Here was my people! Behind her was the enclosure for her parents. Human adults were grasping and commenting that they were ugly, especially the male with his thick face plates. But not I. This was family I knew. These are my apes. I belong among them.

Years have passed and I am resigned that I must live the rest of my life in this "wrong" human body. Plastic surgery may be able to transform me to a more apelike appearance, but what doctor would dare to comply with my request? As for living arrangements, I long for a return to the jungles of Sumatra, our orangutan wildlands. But I have learned that my species is close to extinction. We live solitary lives, fruitarians in the rainforest. Human activity is demolishing our jungle. We have personal territories. It is an impossible dream from me to stake out a piece of that land, crowding out my resident sisters. It would also be a political nightmare. Once I had the surgery in the United States, how would my passport read? Would I travel in an uncomfortable crate? Would I need the World Wildlife Fund's help to reestablish me as endangered among my species? It is truly impossible.

I know there are others like me out there. You see the ridicule faced by transsexuals and you would never dare to be out as a trans-species. You slow movers, who move at a SNAIL'S pace. You proud BITCHES. You women who think you are FOXY. Your scaredy CATS. You lone WOLVES. You contented COWS. You who FERRET out bargain sales. You EAGLE-eyed visionaries. Those of you who do give a HOOT. You DOLPHIN and WHALE savers. You who SQUIRREL away your money. You who HORSE around. You who give BEAR hugs. You stubborn MULES. You who are BULL-headed. You who are strong as an OX. You who like to PIG out. Accept the challenge to acknowledge your true identity. Regard with honor the courage of the first to publicly and proudly identify as a transspecies, Chicken Lady, who writes for *off our backs*. Come out, come out. ♦

Nemesis is the goddess of justice and retribution. Ann believes that laughter is the best retribution.



Responses

Gender and Transsexualism

by Rochelle Glickman

To the Editors:

When I first came out, one of the first things I did was get a subscription to *Lesbian Contradiction*. I am sorry to say that I will not be renewing my subscription, because of the last issue on gender. I had thought the issue would be devoted to what gender means to us, but instead it was full of anti-lesbian and misogynist venom, mostly by transsexuals but some also by lesbians (women born women) defending them. From the transsexuals I sort of expect this, since lesbian bashing is in nowadays (witness the bisexual diatribes). However, it was the lesbians defending them and even the editors who interviewed one, that hurt the most. I see the problem here as being on two levels, one is that of the definition of gender itself, and the other being when someone goes from an oppressor group to an oppressed group, or goes from one ethnic, religious or social group to another.

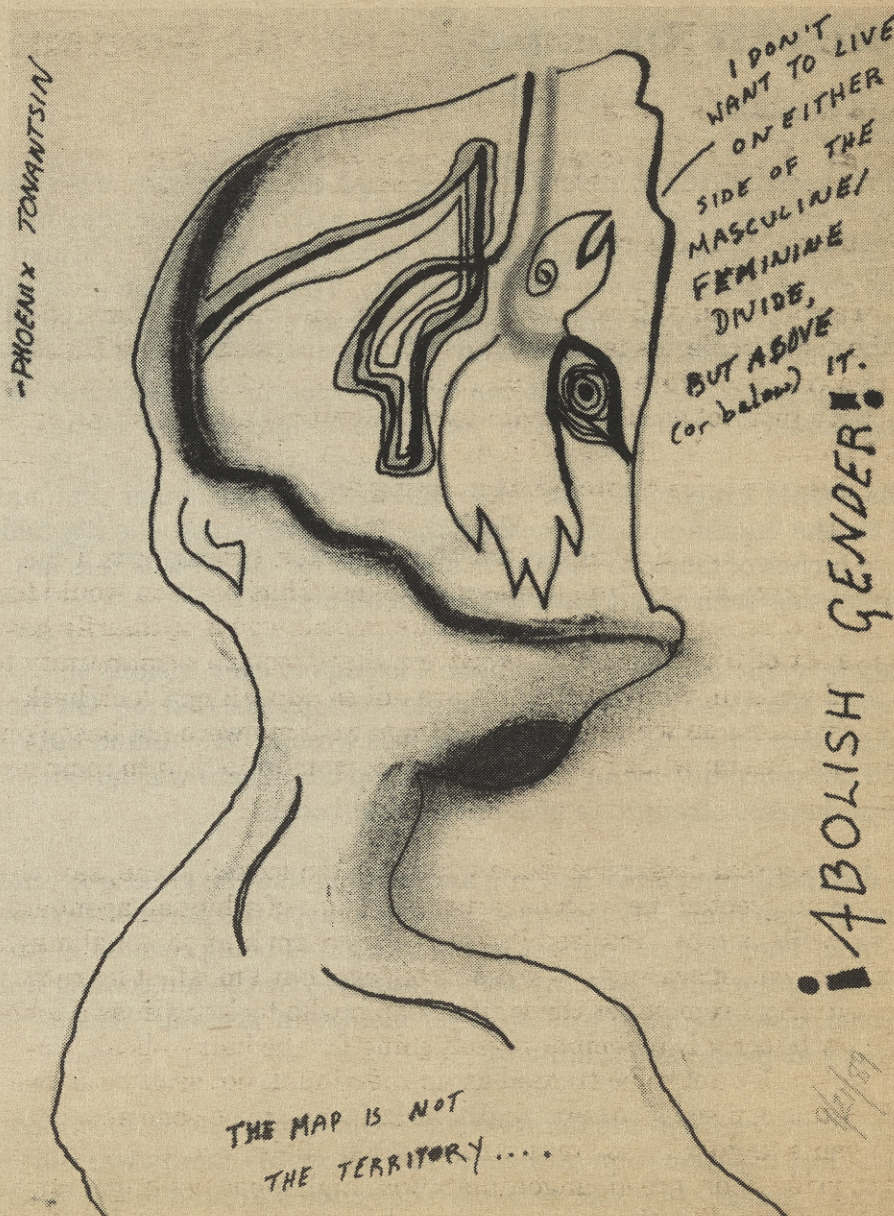
I'd first like to deal with gender. I strongly feel that gender is a social construct, not a biological one. By gender, I mean social and behavioral differences, not physical ones. Gender as we know it does not exist in the animal kingdom, only among humans. For example, take aggression, that men are aggressive, women passive is one of our notions of gender. A book I read recently, *Eve's Rib* by a woman biologist debunks this notion entirely. She gave many examples of females not only initiating courtship, but acting much more aggressively than males (remember the black widow spider). For anyone still insisting on the female as the passive sex, I would recommend trying to come between a female grizzly bear and her cubs and if you live, we can talk.

We learn gender from the time we are born when little baby girls get dressed in pink and boys in blue. There have been countless studies showing just how mothers treat little girls different from little boys. Of course these studies were done many years ago. I realize nowadays the view is that gender is biological. However, it was recently noted that school age children are treated according to their gender and female children get less attention and taken less seriously. What does all this mean? Gender is basically about dominance and submission. The preferred sex, male, gets the most attention and is treated the most seriously. Females, due to lack of attention, are more insecure and more likely to fail where men succeed. Look around you in our society, who has the power? Is this biologically ordained? My point in all this is that one is not born a woman, one becomes one. Because of the way her society treats her, she grows up with a certain set of expectations. The same goes for a man. These expectations in turn are what create our self image.

We are basically social creatures, and even though we have some innate characteristics, most of our self image and subsequent behavior is formed by society's expectations of us. If tomorrow (I am white) I were to go darken my skin, call myself black and expect the Black community to accept me, I would have to be supremely arrogant to believe that I would be accepted. After 40 some odd years as being white you simply can't become black overnight, in several months, or several years. I have lived with my white privilege for too many years for me to see the world in any other way.

This brings me to the next problem I have with transsexuals, and that is one of going from an oppressor group to an oppressed group. They anger me a great deal as a woman. All my life I have as a woman grown up feeling like the "other". The norm is always male and everything I aspired to was controlled by white men. They set the tone for and run our society. Coming out as a lesbian and finding feminism meant that I was no longer this "other," that woman was important and valuable in her own right, not just as an adjunct to a man. Now I read about men, who for whatever reasons always "felt like a woman," have an operation, and presto become women. Then they want and demand immediate acceptance and love from the women's community and they are offended and angry when they don't always get it.

What was really funny was that in reading some of their articles, they sounded so much like men, in spite of their so-called transformation. One went so far as to complain that he couldn't understand why women weren't loving and accepting him as he had always thought that women were the more loving, tolerating and caring sex. If that doesn't sound just like a man, I don't know what does. What boy doesn't grow up, expecting the love and adoration of women and when he doesn't get it, voila! you have lesbian bashing.



Phoenix (Nixie) Tonantzin is a pregnant Irish-American bisexual anti-patriarchal ecologist who lives in Oakland with her 11 month-old daughter, Molly. She likes to think about justice, preserving biodiversity and developing compassion, wisdom and emotional maturity in the human species. She came to California from New York State looking for ethical employment. She now raises a member of the next generation for far less than minimum wage on the vast plantation of AFDC (welfare). Evolution for the fun of it!

It is in this arrogance that these men reveal themselves. This arrogance that comes from the privilege they have enjoyed most of their lives as the dominant sex. Even though they have changed themselves physically, they still think and act like men, and like men demand women love them.

I personally have nothing against sex change operations if someone feels alienated from their gender. I will admit to feeling very alienated from my culture and would like to change cultures if I could. For many years I have read about and admired Native Americans and their culture and think it superior to ours. However I have read many Native American complaints about white "wanna bees" trying to be adopted into Native tribes and expecting instantly to be treated like one. This is white arrogance at its best. What those whites need to learn is humility, something most white men lack, including those transsexuals.

Most lesbians (women born women) don't really want to be with men, or people who act like men. For those who do, that is their right. But for those who don't that is their right, too. As a doubly oppressed group, there are lesbians who want to be in a space where they can feel totally free and safe. Free, I might add, from the oppression of gender, of always being the other, in the shadow of man. It is the supreme arrogance of transsexuals that they have a sex change operation and now want to enjoy all the perks of the lesbian community, including all the support and acceptance we have traditionally given each other. Instead of exhibiting the patience and humility necessary to go from one group to another, in particular an oppressor to an oppressed, they demand and expect instant acceptance. This is so typical of white male behavior.

In the end, it is the response of so many lesbians (women born women) that really hurt the most. That they would be so harsh with those who want to be only with women (women born women) is very painful. It seems that is all I hear nowadays, is lesbian feminists being guilt tripped. What I see happening because of all this is the dissolution of the lesbian community. I'm not talking about difference and di-

Commentary

Notes on Racism Among the Women: Racism in the Lesbian Community

by Sandra W. Haggerty

In some circuits, Black women have become valuable commodities on the social scale. As feminism has become respectable and Black women criticize white women on their racism, a lot of whites want to prove it's just not so. They invite us to submit articles, perform, read, or speak on panels. This has brought about a relatively new situation in my life — whites coming to me, asking for input.

Once I welcomed being in this position; often I went for it. I consciously figured on getting across as a token. That position would be my point of entry to places where white racism would ordinarily have left me out of the program. Now, with a Black women's community to live and work in, white structures are not so appealing. I look back with bitterness on whites whose dealings with me were not based on who I am, but on what I look like: a Black woman to fit into their program.

It was a real disservice when white women looked at me, saw the Black, and greeted me with eagerness because of a hidden agenda. It took a while before I realized it wasn't my charm and personal magnetism that was operating — I've got a big ego, but I'm a fast learner. How bitterly I remember the white women who took me in as a token and how bitterly I remember myself going for the bait — hook, line and sinker. I want to be treated as an individual, not seen with awe and fear as someone's dream nightmare. I want to be seen as a person who wants to do a job for reasons not unlike their own: a person subject to pride, fear, greed, anger, ambition, high ideas, willingness, trust, and love, like themselves. Instead, many see me as a Black woman to be used to make a project look good if I act right.

I feel a personal shame for having been willing to be that statistic or chocolate chip in the sea of white cookies. From that token's position, I tried to take myself somewhere, but doubted underneath that I could have gotten in on my own merit, not being sure of my place in the structure. That's the legacy I inherited from the perverted relationship where some whites looked good practicing tokenism and I was willing to let them get over through me, I was left not knowing where I really stood with them, trying to figure out what I wanted to do in service of who I really was.

Once I looked with trust to the feminist opinion. It was the minority viewpoint I would read and hunger after and identify with. I appreciate that there is a women's community with networks and publications, and that we do share a general point of view. With feminism established as a part of the current order, some things are easier for me, but elements of the old ways do continue to take on new forms. Now that a feminist angle is being targeted into cigarette commercials, I feel ripped off all over again. In a like manner, Black is "hip" — well, not so hip anymore. More accurately, now white women are supremely sensitive to being accused of racism and try to avoid the word like the plague; it makes their shit turn to water if anyone even thinks the word in their direction. Now that they are conscious of Black women who come out with such hip analysis and delivery, many of them want to hold onto us.

I resent feeling that they want us around for the power of our image: picture a handsome, angry Black woman on the cover of many a magazine that ever to rarely deals with a Black viewpoint. So many women who are talking about racism are more concerned about public

versity here either. I'm not calling for any kind of homogeneity or "political line" and enjoy differences and differences of opinion. However, trashing is another thing. I don't understand why there can't be differences of opinion without the necessity to trash.

As an alienated white person who has a high regard for Native Americans and their culture I think trying to support them in regaining their land and rights would be the best way I can show my support and regard as a "wanna be". The same goes for transsexuals. Unless they learn patience and humility, they only reveal themselves to be the men they really are. ♦

Rochelle Glickman is a lesbian feminist surviving by doing clerical work in San Francisco. "I live after hours with my lover and dog and spend time with friends in Lesbian Uprising!"

relations than they are with gut-level sisterhood. They want us so that they don't have to feel uncomfortable should any Blacks call them on the question, or should any other whites get into the game of reminding their sisters that there are no women of color in evidence. Real construction is bypassed. It's easier to opt for the cosmetic treatment. This is like being a nice girl. You smile at anyone who smiles at you and you don't dislike anyone because that's the way you've been brought up. But the truth of it all is that only by trading honest viewpoints can people negotiate and work out frank differences.

White women deny that they seek out women of color because pressure has been put on them. These white women are almost trained to respond with a politically correct manner when they're questioned. If some of them acknowledge resentment or that they are bewildered that they can't seem to do anything right by Black women anymore, some truth could emerge that will free us on all sides. But so many are afraid to come from anything other than masks of good behavior.

Yet I know when whites are running from me, trying to deflect any confrontations they fear I will want to bring into play. I can tell by their aggression on the subjects of race and racism — as though it were outside them somehow, or as if by giving an appropriate nod to guilt, blame, and responsibility in a politically correct stance, they'll be safe from the anger they seem to expect from me. (When white talk about what's being done to the poor "darkies," they are still taking the missionary position and fucking Black people.)

I have yet to hear white women talk about Black women as people, as individuals they like or dislike. In the conversations I have heard, we are either "heroic," "surviving" or "triply oppressed." They'll urge sympathy on us for Black men's purported sexism or condemn white men. When a white woman assumes I'd be interested in something just because I'm a Black person, I withdraw one giant step inside. I'm dismayed when I see women at concerts or poetry readings knowing how to clap in all the right places and saying a nervous "yeah" — as if by verbal affirmation of Black women's performance their guilt can be discharged and penance done so blame is deflected from them.

Today, white women see a lot of Black women who want to give their energy solely to Black women rather than deal with white women. I imagine white women often don't know what to do and feel perplexed. A good number of Black women don't want to be bothered teaching or working with them because white women aren't as innocent in their racism as they put out. Others get mad at whites for trying to include Black people. It seems like you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. What's a poor white girl to do?

This thinking is, of course, not leading to the real truth. I think the answer to the seeming paradox is for white women to do their own consciousness-raising and examine what they come up with among themselves.

The working out of racist attitudes is process work for white women to do for themselves, with one another. Once they can see themselves through the rough stuff, they will actually be freer and truer to themselves. I appreciate that kind of honesty in an individual more than a correct line. Honest is something I sense, can open up to, and trust. Race differences are real, but they're not everything. We work out our real differences from honesty.

After they've done their own conscious-raising, I hope these white women don't come to me for a stamp of approval. I'm having a hard enough time dealing with my own stuff and hoping my women will give me the pats on the back I crave. I don't think many Black women are going to credit whites for doing their own homework. White women seem to want this at some level and when it doesn't come, they feel pissed and neglected. Well, that's not enough for Black women who have other concerns and don't want to play nanny in any mode. I've been brought up to feel I should be grateful for every bit of progress, but I frankly do get angry at white women who are actively trying to deal with their racism and the new trips they lay on me in their growth process. Those white women who aren't so anxious and eager to clean up their acts and attitudes around race are the ones I can have friendships with. It's a tricky balance to find, but I think the important personal quality I respond to is honesty.

What is going on with all our concerns about racism is, indeed, change. There is willingness among some white women to do some work, but the transformation isn't complete yet. Racist attitudes linger because the job isn't all the way done. People who haven't seen that change is possible can't whole-heartedly believe in it. If they

continued on next page

Commentary

Notes from the Twenty-third Year: Musings of an Ageing Member of Lesbian Nation

by S. A. Giacozano

Even before 1974 Lesbian Nation was dead, the party was over and the cannibal system had taken it into its gut as difference and reals-
bians went underground where we remain. My heartfelt apologies to
those dykes who came out after this. Trust me. Your euphoria power-
ful as it may have seemed to you at the time couldn't know the high it
was to have lived in Lesbian Nation. We were a tight and diverse cos-
mic clan. Up until '74 the tribe of Lesbian was almost a reality. But
most of this predates feminist consciousness. The '80s put on the press
to redefine feminist in large part by creating a past for women in the
het mood, I-once-was-a-wife-mother mythology trying hard to out-
publish out-shout out-rage politicalesbians back into the rear of the
bus of history. We may be underground now but some of us haven't
forgotten what it was like in Lesbian Universe. Now of course it would
be impossible for me old Archdyke thought unknown (as many of us
are) to even get a press pass for a bona fide celebration of women's
year. So there they were drafting off of us the whole time. These same
straight women feminists as they fancied went on to write about them-
selves in the most high-and-mighty ways. You'd have to be into ex-
treme self-torture to read this stuff. (I hate to say it but I've read the
things until one day I slapped my head in revelation of its true mean-
ing: I'd completely let the decade of the '80s go by and what had I ac-
complished? Well, maybe half a dozen possible makes on dykes in the
Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America).

Consciousness came slowly. Didn't these straight sisters know that
they were only a Shadow Movement? Still oblivion ain't so bad. Under-
ground these days we mostly trade war stories and vegetarian recipes.
But I'm telling you the sex is still as good. Yes that's the most impor-
tant thing never mind the Lesbian Nation stuff. Well sometimes I con-
fess I might be caught separating realsbians from unreal ones (or is it
nonreal) while plucking the petals of a rose. You know what I mean.
So down here in Movementland it still seems hip to do it in the old-
fashioned way kissing and jumping into bed and like that. Up There
(that's what I call it from down here) they want to keep us dykes in the
tiny drawer they built to put us in. Meanwhile they're all la-di-da pre-
tending to socialize themselves and their daughters and warning them
about the likes of us just as if a second wave never happened. Some-
times I wonder about that myself. I think we've come full circle
though. Can't believe in literature or history anymore. Or anything
else for that matter. It's not supposed to matter that Mailer stabbed
his wife or some French deconstructionist guys murdered theirs. The
tribe has because a rollicking comedy for all to enjoy. Maybe especially
for ourselves to enjoy. Well I'm enjoying my little retrospective at any
rate. I would be remiss if I did not mention here lesbian nuptials, S &
M and motherhood. All providing endless enjoyment, annoyance, and
titters for our Shadow Sisters. Up There lesbianism has become a pre-
tense for backlash. Lesbianism as revenge. Once again I find myself
crawling around apologizing to the happy couples. But to continue. In
the course of this struggle for the trophy called feminism the straight
women in the movement and many in academia (some born after the
rise-and-demise of the Lesbian Nation) developed their very own cult
of personalities (I guess the Friedan-Millet-Steinem axis was just too
— how shall I say? — too without footnotes for them) using that same
deconstruction I mentioned before and whatever else to give credence
to their stolen ideas. It made a nice smokescreen for their fear of lesbi-
ans. Feminism has always been The War Between Lesbians and
Straights. They went on to use the what I always thought was an ok
term, women, to whoops omit us dykes from reality consciousness all
the while pretending they were including us kind of like when the
term people was underhandedly used to make us believe they meant
women too.

Racism in the Lesbian Community

continued from previous page

haven't lived it in their personal lives, it's hard to see change in politi-
cal terms. It won't come together in one fell swoop. After the major re-
construction, there will be corners to straighten out and the mainte-
nance work will be a day-to-day job. But this is life work. Any attempt
to make it better can only work to good. ♦

Sandra was born with Taurus virtues in San Francisco where she re-
mains to this day with her two sons.



Alisa Gordaneer writes, "I've just returned from travelling — I went to Europe to hide from myself! Have lately been occupying my time by drawing, painting and acting in an improvisational comedy theatre company. I work as a coordinator for Canadian University Press. I still love chocolate.

And so we arrive at today and the disavowal of the label feminist only this time they have no one to blame but themselves. In the '80s they tried to cultivate the Doctrine of the Straight Feminist, some-
thing which I've always thought was a contradiction and not a paradox
which confusion we have sister Steinem to thank for refining. I'm
afraid the deal these feminists cut with the new male left which is still
the old male left dressed up often in drag (they enjoy it) has finally
turned on them to mix a metaphor. They have given us feminism with-
out women thus leaving themselves out of their own pahdon me dis-
course but the fact remains that there is no feminism without lesbians
and they are not happy and again they have no one to blame but
themselves. And now they are crying in their beer or is it Perrier (they
used to drink wine) because they haven't been able to get themselves
abortions. They're still whining for their equality with men out of
some I swear flamenco sensibility. The end of all of this is the aptly
named Camille (Paglia) stand-up comedian doing her women's non-
existence schtick to the cheers of crowds.

Call it nostalgia if you want but in those few years up until 1974
we lesbians managed some damn good peeps only to be beaten down
by the straight feminists who wanted a movement for themselves and,
I might say with a smirk on my face, did they ever get one. Glad it's
not mine. These same ones seemed to say, Hope you've enjoyed your-
selves girls 'cause the good time's over. I have encouraged these wom-
en and lived to regret it.

Anyway I was certainly oblivious to all these goings-on as I was
bar-hopping all the time trying to make a reputation for myself, how-
ever regional, slow dancing myself into a stupor with all the women I
could. Since that misty time sexual abuse, alcoholism and drug addic-
tion have crept out of the female woodwork and sort of took the fun
right out of it. Even my spirits have sunk low. So here we all are, mor-
bid and everything really to this very day. Like we are nothing but
The Abused (it makes you almost prefer the appellation feminist). If
anything could take the life out of Lesbianation this did it and straight
feminists were quick to seize the opportunity to discredit politicalesbi-
anism and make pain synonymous with feminism. No wonder would-
be campus radical dykes run screaming from talk of a Movement these
days. I recall we stood for just the reverse, for fun and enticement any-
way. At least I, all five-foot-one inch of me, felt so for a time while on
the dance floor trying to place my knee in the one perfect spot to make
her come. ♦

S.A. Giacozano is 43 years old, a lesbian-feminist and once again un-
employed. She is currently living in seclusion in Cambridge, Massa-
chusetts.

Yes, Mr. President. Let's Change This Country!

by Angela M.L. Pattatucci ©

The other day, while reading the current issue of *Lesbian Contradiction* over lunch, pausing occasionally to ponder issues and engage in an activity for which Lesbians seem to have an unending source of energy: criticizing and deconstructing the present system of thought, it occurred to me that we have accepted the *status quo* of oppression for much too long. Since change toward new directions will be a major focus of the upcoming national elections, it seems appropriate to hold our elected officials accountable for their campaign promises and suggest — no DEMAND — that some key changes in national policy be implemented.

As I gazed around me at the crowd of people in the restaurant where I was dining, an idea came immediately to mind. My first proposal is that a Constitutional amendment be ratified making it illegal for a straight woman to look like a Dyke, or for that matter, any straight person to look like they are Gay. For too long, straight people have been co-opting styles of appearance that had their origins in the Gay community as a means of helping us to recognize each other in an oppressive society. Thus, I propose that any straight person caught in the act of publicly appearing Gay should be sentenced to a minimum of one month *community* service as a waitress/waiter in a Gay bar, where their fashion statements can be fully appreciated.

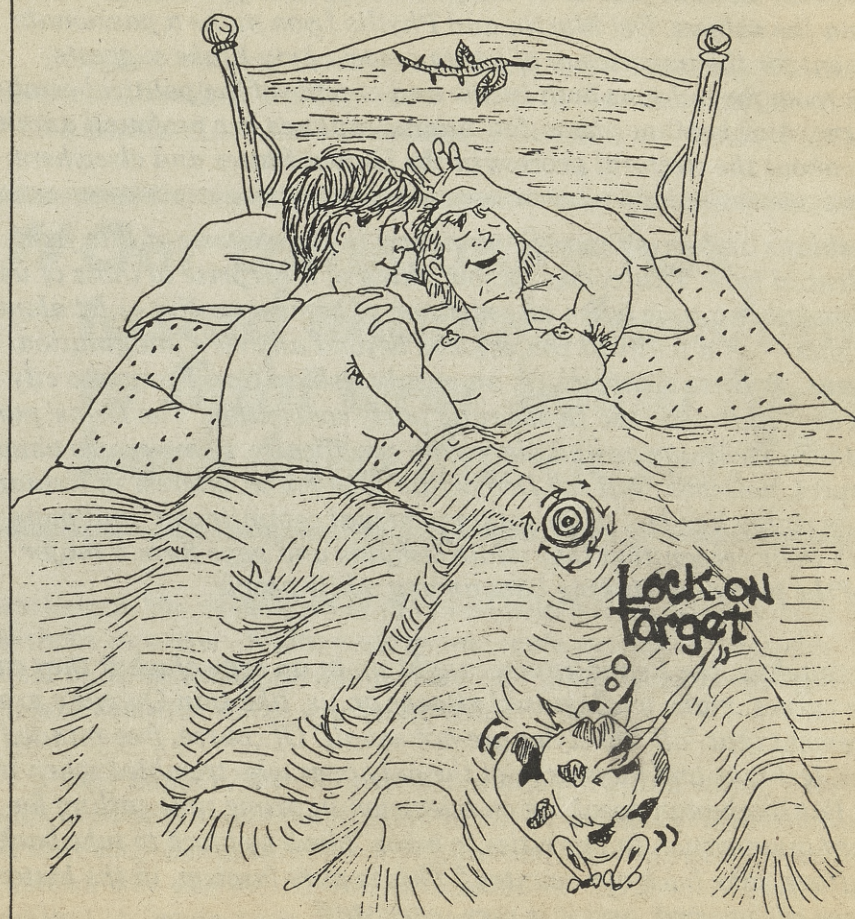
My second proposal is that the fee for (heterosexual) marriage licenses be increased to \$1,000. A portion of this money would be allocated to pay for the medical expenses of Lesbians and Gay men that have been emotionally devastated and/or physically injured by hate crimes, and the remainder used to fund support groups for Lesbian and Gay couples desiring to be legally married, but denied this right to the basic pursuit of happiness in our oppressive society. Furthermore, I would like to go on record as stating that public displays of affection made by heterosexuals, while simultaneously scorning Lesbians that do the same thing, undermine *our* family values and frighten *our* children. Thus, I would like to propose that straight people caught in the act of publicly displaying affection be subjected to a surgical procedure that would permanently join them at the hip. This would serve as a visual warning for unsuspecting people that these hip-joined heterosexuals might spontaneously, without prior notification or concern for those around them, selfishly engage in public displays of affection.

// I would like to propose that straight people caught in the act of publicly displaying affection be subjected to a surgical procedure that would permanently join them at the hip. //

On another issue, I propose that the Boy Scouts of America be declared a monopoly and matching funding be required for alternative organizations. One such alternative group might be named the *Real Boys of America*.

Speaking of Americans, it seems to me that usurping the term "American" to exclusively refer to citizens of the U.S.A. reeks of ethnic arrogance. For example, I have friends residing in Canada and in various Central and South American countries who are deeply offended by this practice. Thinking about this, it has occurred to me that part of the problem may be connected to the fact that people in the U.S.A. have no other term by which to refer to themselves. Canadians, for example, might proclaim, "Hey, we're just as American as you!" However, I suspect that their ethnic pride may be more attached to the term "Canadian" than to "American." Each American country outside the U.S.A. has another simple, descriptive term. Perhaps this is why inhabitants of the U.S.A. cling to the term "American". We have nothing else.

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With this in mind, I suggest that people in the U.S.A. begin using a designation to which no other group has claim. I suspect that many individuals living in countries other than the U.S.A. would feel strongly that the term "Jerks" would be applicable. But being a little more kind and gentle, I propose that we adopt a simple term like *Plitusa* — pronounced *plit* (rhyming with *clit*) -oo-sah."

Plitusa is an acronym for *People Living in The United States of America*, and it seems to pass all essential criteria for a workable national designation. *Plitusa* is easy to pronounce, isn't used by any other group, and is practical. For example, when someone asks from where you originate, you can simply respond by proclaiming, "I'm Plitusan." This new designation is also functional for people outside of the U.S.A. It is simple to substitute *Plitusan* for *American* and still be able to make statements such as, "Those lousy *Plitusans* think that they own the entire planet," or, "What an incredible jerk — he must be a *Plitusan*."

Adopting the term *Plitusan* would solve another problem as well. I imagine that co-opting the term "American" to refer exclusively to people living in the U.S.A. (*Plitusans*), coupled with the negative image associated with individuals from the U.S.A. throughout the world, has caused a large number of people living in countries of the Americas to dissociate themselves from the term "American." After all, we (*Plitusans*) have given the term "American" such a bad name. However, use of the term *Plitusan* would afford an opportunity for *all* Americans to embrace their complete continental identity without the negative image. No longer would stereotypes be projected upon the wrong people. *Plitusans* are *Plitusans* are *Plitusans*, and *all* Americans would be free to be Americans.

Finishing the last morsel of lunch, this *Plitusan* sat back and smiled with deep satisfaction. Yes, Mr. President. Let's change this country!♦

Angela "Tana" Pattatucci is a D.C. Dyke. She holds a doctorate in genetics from Indiana University at Bloomington and is a member of the Society for Women in Philosophy. In addition to research, she enjoys being a rock musician.

Elections

Every Four Years...

Every four years we feel we ought to run a special section on women, lesbians and elections — whether the world needs it or not! This presidential election year is no exception, and we're presenting three articles on the subject. Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon make a passionate argument for the importance of lesbian votes. Amy Blake suggests there's room for lesbians both inside and outside of the political establishment. And LesCon editor Jan Adams explores her profound ambivalence about the electoral process in the United States and elsewhere.

Lesbians and gays figure prominently in the rhetoric of this year's presidential race. This comes as something of a surprise to those of us who remember a time when any mention of homosexuality — let alone gay rights — in a political context was beyond anyone's imagination. This year, Roberta Achtenburg, an openly lesbian San Francisco city supervisor addressed the Democratic party convention. The Dems' party platform mentions us and our rights specifically. Some cynics among us suspect, however, that the Democrats' new-found interest in lesbian and gay rights has less to do with any actual commitment, and more to do with their recognition that white lesbians and gays form a major part of the party's shrinking base among white people.

Meanwhile, the Republicans, caught up in an orgy of what they call family values, make undisguised attacks on us, like Dan Quayle's pronouncement that "all life-styles are not equal." Of course, free-minded women, lesbians and gays are not the only ones who trembled when we heard Pat Buchanan speaking on television in prime time calling for military intervention in our cities to move "block by block to take back our culture, take back our country." This is pure fascism, in the historical sense of the word, and it is very scary stuff.

ACTUP! has adopted a slogan in this presidential year: "Vote as if your life depended on it!" To the extent that there is any hope that the federal government will seriously address the AIDS epidemic, ACTUP! is right. But Lesbian and gay lives are also on the line in two states — Oregon and Colorado — where right-wing coalitions have placed anti-gay measures on the ballot. Oregon's initiative would prohibit any state-wide or local gay rights laws, officially define homosexuality as a perversion and abomination, and outlaw any state funding for any organization that suggests otherwise — including, for example, AIDS clinics and public schools. Colorado's would amend the Colorado state constitution to prohibit state or local gay rights laws.

ACTUP! says, "Vote as if your life depended on it." In my poor, mostly Latino, neighborhood we more often see graffiti suggesting that "If voting changed anything, they'd make it illegal." This year it looks to this LesCon editor as if in some places in this country, we do have to vote — not to change things, but to keep them from getting any worse. However, in such dry, hard times, voting seems to me to be only the very least we can do.

— Rebecca Gordon for LesCon

Your Vote Does Make a Difference

by Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon

To the people who think their one vote doesn't make a difference, March Fong Eu, California's Secretary of State says, "Wrong! There are too many real-life examples where one vote has made the difference between winning and losing, between enacting a law or bond measure and rejecting it."

Two of the many examples she offers include: the 1982 city council race in Westmoreland, Imperial County, where the mayor lost his bid for a second term by one vote; the 1948 presidential race in which Harry Truman carried Ohio and California by less than one vote per precinct, and that gave him sufficient electoral votes to win the presidency.

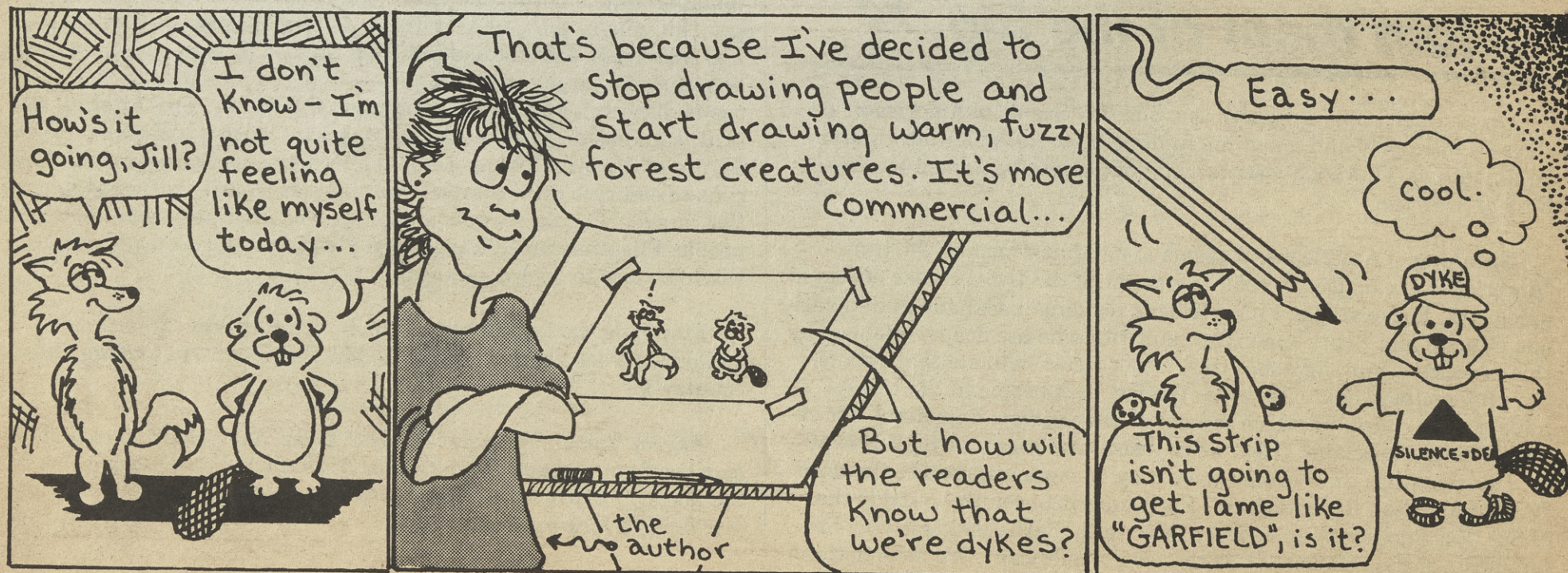
To those who think their abstention from voting doesn't make a difference, we say, "Wrong!" Vital decisions and appointments (such as the U.S. Supreme Court justices with *life terms*) are being made not by majority mandate but by governments elected by a minority of the eligible electorate. Conservatives and right wing religious bigots have gained political power by default. A non-vote is a vote for right wingers who would overthrow choice: abortion, lifestyle, Lesbian/Gay rights, affirmative action, bilingual education, sex education, the National Endowment for the Arts, etc.

A protest vote for the Greens, Peace and Freedom or Queer Nation splinter parties counts the same as an abstention. A vote for an "independent" candidate is risky when more than ever we need a president and a Congress from the same party in order to turn the federal government around.

Working within our current electoral process, we Lesbians have made remarkable strides in electing Lesbians to positions of power. In San Francisco Roberta Achtenburg and Carole Migden serve on the Board of Supervisors. In addition, Carole chairs the city's Democratic Central Committee and serves on the Democratic National Committee and its Platform Committee for 1992. In New York Deborah Glick became the first out Lesbian to be elected to the state's legislature. In Maine Dale McCormick, an open Lesbian, defeated an incumbent white male for the state senate. Susan Farnsworth serves in Maine's House of Representatives, as does Karen Clark in Minnesota and Gail Shibley in Oregon. Lesbians are serving on city councils and as mayors — some of them out, many of them still in the closet. Sherry Harris is the first African-American Lesbian to be elected (Seattle City Council). And, as Supervisor Achtenburg remarked recently, we now have more Lesbian judges around the country than we can count. (Roberta's lover is San Francisco Municipal Court Judge Mary Morgan, the first open Lesbian judge in California.) The above is impressive even without listing all the Gay men who have been elected or appointed.

Roe v. Wade is hanging by a thread. One more conservative appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court could mean its overthrow and a

So It Goes



In/Out: Let's Get Crackin'

by Amy Blake

When it comes to politics, we Lesbians can be our own worst enemy. Whether we are inside or outside of the system matters less than if we are actively confronting our potential to be corrupted by power. We are too critical and unsupportive of the efforts of Lesbians across the political spectrum. Not everyone has the same process (personal or political). Lesbians are beautifully diverse and will never all have the same agenda and a willingness to mobilize at the same time. It is our individual responsibility to be honest about who we are and what we need rather than simply falling in-step with each P.C. idea. We often leave it up to the Lesbians who are thinking and acting on their political convictions to take care of the entire community and we get real angry when they fall short of our expectations. We must continue to challenge one another and we need to find creative ways to build on the work of Lesbians rather than tearing it apart.

Could Lesbian Separatists have their space if it were illegal for women to own land? Could Lesbians working in the system thrive without the reprieve of Lesbian community? Our US political system, as it stands, is not going away in the near future nor is it going to spontaneously address our concerns. We must work together to create the Lesbian community that we want and at the same time, stay active in this country's social and political process.

40-year wait for a new, possibly fairer, court. An alternative would be securing passage of the Freedom of Choice Act by Congress and the signature of a pro-choice president. Bill Clinton is clearly pro-choice. George Bush is just as clearly anti-choice.

Further, Bill Clinton has a strong pro-Gay stance and an AIDS program in print which has been highly praised by AIDS activists. Bush is anti-gay.

"Two percent is not enough." It is preposterous that there are only two women in the U.S. Senate (Barbara Mikulski and Nancy Kassebaum). This year, with 17 women running for the Senate and numerous others for the House, we have a chance to double, triple or better our numbers in the "old men's club" as well as in the lower chamber.

The November election is crucial to the future of women, Lesbians, Gays, people of color, and the disabled — groups which could elect a majority government. It can be the Year of the Woman and defeat of the backlash that has been undermining the gains we have made.

On 20/20 Barbara Waters asked Bush about the number of women running for U.S. Senate. He just laughed and laughed, saying that just makes it easier for Republicans to win.

The choice is up to you who gets the last laugh. ♦

Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon completed an analysis of the gains and losses Lesbians have made in the last 20 years for the new edition of their book, *Lesbian/Woman*.

Lesbians belong both inside and outside the system. In order for social change to come about, the key is to be active. I have been in one too many conversations where a social-political effort was criticized for either being too radical or too weak and no effort was made to develop an alternative plan of action. There is enough work for all of us and different paths can lead to liberation.

Lesbians working outside the system are courageous warriors who keep the new ideas coming and stretch the bounds of all our thinking. These Lesbians are the cornerstone of Lesbian community. Lesbians

//Our community has tasted enough freedom to fight ever being forced back into the closet.//

working in the system must communicate our identity and our needs to those in power. White male power types are not impacted in the least by Lesbian Separatist politics. We need Lesbians on the inside to ensure that our voices are being heard.

I fully support the election of Lesbians to public office. I think that such Lesbians should be out and involved in the Lesbian community so that they can accurately represent our concerns and diversity. A Lesbian who can win in the political arena can give credibility and be vigilant on issues near and dear to our survival. We have women in our community with these talents and we should support and promote their work.

Our community has tasted enough freedom to fight ever being forced back into the closet. We are being accepted more and more into the mainstream, which helps reduce the stigma that they created for us. We have had an impact on religious institutions, which indicates a fundamental shift in attitude and beliefs about Lesbians. This progress has come about as a culmination of the political efforts of Lesbians. When the day comes that Lesbian identity is considered a blessing and our communities have welcome parades upon our return from the festivals, we still must be on guard to defend against the erosion of our rights.

The Lesbian political strategy for 1992 and beyond is to be a visible force that politicians must acknowledge. We need to hold our representatives responsible for promoting the rights of Lesbians. Lesbians need to be connected so that when we take action, our philosophy can be informed by the work of other Lesbians so it is not viewed in isolation. ♦

Amy Blake writes, "I am a Lesbian, a social worker, and a proud owner of a new women's bookstore — A Woman's Prerogative Bookstore and Cafe — in Ferndale, Michigan."



Elections

On the One Hand... Two Views of Electoral Politics

by Jan Adams

I'm of two radically opposed minds when it comes to elections. For many years I thought I ought to be able to reconcile the two strands in my understanding—and since that couldn't be done, I didn't have much to do with the electoral arena. More recently I've given up trying to put together the unreconcilable and have very much enjoyed working in electoral politics, several times as campaign staff. Doing campaign work has taught me a lot, but it hasn't altered the two mind problem. This issue of *LesCon* gives me a chance to share the two strands of my thought about electoral work in the hope that other women may find them interesting and perhaps use them as a take-off point for their own thinking.

On the One Hand: Electoral Politics Isn't Worth Shit

When I think about "The Big Picture," about this moment in history and the progress of the human struggle to create a sustainable and just society, electoral politics seems hopelessly, utterly irrelevant. The communist project for creating justice by means of state control of wealth has proved intolerable to the people who had to live it. But "democracy"—the system in which the people use our electoral weight to make the state "promote the general welfare" instead of merely the particular welfare of the current rulers—looks every bit as likely to be a casualty of rapacious world capitalism as was the communist system.

Oh sure, countries will go on holding elections; in fact holding regular elections may be a requirement for membership in good standing in the New World Order. But those elections will less and less be allowed to be about anything that matters to most people. This is already totally clear in most countries around the world where the dictates of the International Monetary Fund, or IMF, minutely regulate what elected governments can do. Elections can change the cast of characters at the helm, but their function remains the same: to extract from the many anything they may have of value for the benefit of the wealthy few. If somebody gets elected who wants to use government for some wider purpose, the rules change. Sometimes the "international community" (that one means international big business and its client governments) decides there was no election (example, Nicaragua in 1984 where the hated Sandinistas actually won with well over 60 percent of the vote). Sometimes it is just decided that somebody else ought to be president (look at Haiti, where the local military has been allowed to expel the popularly elected president Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide with barely a peep from "respectable" governments).

But those are "underdeveloped" countries some may say; in the U.S. certainly elections matter. Perhaps—but that is getting ever more arguable. The much heralded U.S.-Mexico-Canada "free trade" treaty which President Bush offers as a triumph of his government will be a major impediment to making elections matter. In the name of "free" trade and "fair" competition, governments will be prohibited from imposing strict environmental controls which might impede the accumulation of wealth by the owning class. Already U.S. companies are demanding that implementing "free trade" requires Canada to dismantle its state-supported system of free health care for all; they insist that the existence of the Canadian health care system is an unfair competitive advantage over U.S. companies which have been coerced by unions into paying for workers' health insurance, which the U.S. government fails to provide. When international treaties guarantee the rights of the wealthy, the mere wishes of voters can't be allowed to get in the way.

This year—even though we are living in a recession, or perhaps a depression, and probably 85 percent of the U.S. people feel the government is failing to do its job—in a way I don't feel I have to argue that elections have stopped serving the interests of most people. Even this year, most people won't vote. And I don't think that is because most people are apathetic or stupid—I think people are responding to an accurate gut sense that voting won't do anything to improve the quality of their lives. And I can't honestly argue with that: I am not at all sure that voting *can* do anything for most people. The minority of us who do engage passionately with political issues may well be the deluded ones, caught up in an exciting fantasy made with smoke and mirrors. I am eerily reminded of the finding of researchers that those

Lesbian Call-Forwarding:



persons who paid the most attention to the "news" of the Gulf War proved to be least able to give any coherent account the situation in the Middle East. The thought bears holding...

On the Other Hand: Electoral Politics Is Where It's At

So here I am once again putting in eighteen hour days, pouring out my heart and energy, risking irretrievably trying the patience of my long-suffering friends who want to know where I have disappeared to—all to elect a candidate to some dubiously effectual office—in this case, *LesCon* editor Angie Fa to the San Francisco School Board. Why do I do this work?

For one thing, the work itself is sometimes gratifyingly empowering to me and other individuals who do it. Electoral work (at least at the grassroots level) consists of getting lots and lots of people working and moving together in an organized way to achieve a common goal. The experience of this kind of teamwork is sadly lacking in our society, especially for women. There is a wonderful feeling of strength that comes from knowing that while you are out holding a banner on a street corner, somewhere nearby other people are ringing doorbells and a whole other crew is making phone calls, all contributing to the same end.

Moreover, though I fundamentally think real political work goes on beside and outside the conventional electoral arena, most people don't think so. In fact, for most people, elections are all there is to politics. I may suspect such a view is a systematically cultivated delusion in the service of the status quo, but it is the cultural norm. And consequently, many truly generous, hard-working, committed people work in electoral politics trying over and over to use the electoral system to make people's lives a little better. Sure, elections are about power and consequently attract every ambitious shark around. But at the base level, the grassroots volunteers in electoral politics are some of the best people one could get a chance to meet and I am very glad not to have excluded myself from that chance.

Finally, though elections can't be the end point of our vision, we don't have the option of throwing away or opting out of *any* chance to struggle for our humanity, whether as women who must have the right to control our own bodies or as queers who only want our right to love. Elections may not be the end-all, but it does seem necessary to throw ourselves into that arena against the tide of hate which threatens to engulf us. There are lots of levels to get involved in electoral work and women will draw their own lines. Some of us work for attractive candidates (this year a lot of them are women) and others are stuck contributing their energies to "lesser evils" to ward off some horror like a David Duke—or a Pat Buchanan—or a George Bush. Some of us get the privilege of working to pass positive laws which might even have the effect of changing the idea of family, as lesbians and gays did here in passing the domestic partnership ordinance in San Francisco in 1990. More of us have to work in electoral politics to fight off attempts to legislate hate against us, as lesbians and gays must do this year in Oregon and Colorado. In all of this electoral work we have to confront the racism and the sexism and the homophobia which underlie all interactions in this society.

There are no conclusions to this article—just the reality that the only way I know to keep going is to keep going, and the suspicion that there isn't anything else to do anyway. ♦

From Us

LesCon Will Be Ten Years Old in December!

Hard to believe? It is for us, too. Back in 1982 probably none of the four founders — Jan Adams, Betty Johanna, Rebecca Gordon and Jane Meyerding — thought what we called our “experiment” would last this long, or attract such a wide readership. *LesCon* is now available in over 80 bookstores around the country. Why, this summer after ten years we even got a mention in *Ms.* magazine — now that’s fame! Seriously, these ten years have been enriched for us by the privilege of getting to know an extraordinary group of women — *LesCon*’s writers, artists and readers. (We’re also a little bit proud of ourselves. In ten years we’ve never missed an issue. *LesCon* may have been skimpy once or twice, but it’s never been late. Of course, this feat was pulled off through the years in large part through the heroic efforts of certain former editors, in the face of the tendency of certain current editors to go charging off all over the world at the drop of an invitation...)

So how are the current editors — Jan Adams, Angie Fa and Rebecca Gordon — planning to celebrate all this success? This December, we’re going to run a special 10th Anniversary “Best of *LesCon*” issue. We’ll go all the way back to *LesCon* #1 in search of the very best articles, drawings and cartoons that have appeared in these pages over the years. If you’ve got a favorite you think we should include, we’d love to hear from you! Since this is an election year, we’d like to give our readers something worth voting for. We’re not too keen on either of the boys running for Prez, but we’d love to get your votes for the Three Top Things You’ve Seen in *LesCon*. Send your ballots to 584 Castro St., #263, San Francisco, CA 94114.

By the way — we’ll also be publishing plenty of new material, too, in December, so keep those drawings and articles coming! See the box on page 2 for information on how to submit work to *LesCon*. Or write us for contributors’ guidelines. ♦

LesCon Editor Runs for School Board!

Over the years, various *LesCon* editors have engaged in strange adventures, but none of us has ever been tempted to run for office — until now!

LesCon editor Angie Fa, who is also the chair of the Asian-American Studies department at San Francisco City College, is running for one of four open seats on the San Francisco School Board. If she’s elected, she’ll be the first out lesbian or gay person of color ever elected to any position in San Francisco.

Public schools have been a terrible casualty of the federal and state administrations over the last ten years. We believe that free, public, high-quality education is a human right and a pre-requisite for a democratic society. We’re proud of our co-editor! ♦



Getting By in Hard Times

No way around it — these are hard times for most people in this country, and for most women. They’re hard economic times: a lot of people are out of work; a lot of people who do have jobs have dead-end, low paying “Mac-Jobs”. They’re hard political times: right-wing hatred and outright fascism seem to be gaining a new mainstream currency. They’re hard times spiritually: it’s hard to hold on to hope as we watch the victories of the last 20 years erode, as the forces of pure, vicious greed (otherwise known as multi-national corporations and the governments they control) threaten to destroy the planet.

LesCon’s March issue will feature a special focus on women’s strategies for getting by in hard times. We want to know how you manage. How do you survive economically? Do you work two jobs? Do you stretch an unemployment or AFDC check farther than it can go? Do you share your home with other people? Do you find yourself unexpectedly living with your parents — or find your adult children living with you? Is there a union where you work? Do you see strength in combining with others in the same position, or does getting by on your own seem like the best bet?

Where does political activity fit in your survival strategy? Does politics seem like a luxury to you these days? A necessity? A source of danger? If you’re involved in political activity of any kind, *LesCon* would like to hear about that as well.

How do you feed your soul in hungry times? With ritual? With friendships and/or family? With books, television or movies? How do you keep hope alive? Or do you find ways to survive without hope?

We know that for many women around the world and in this country, times have never been anything but hard. The current recession is nothing new for these women, though in recessionary times poor people usually get poorer. *LesCon* wants to hear from women for whom hard times are nothing new.

Deadline for the March issue is January 15, 1993. As always, we’re happy to get submissions in written form, on tape, as drawings. See the box on Page 2 for details on how to send us your work. ♦

...Now for the Bad News

LesCon has always asked its readers to pay for their subs on a sliding scale — more if you can, less if you can’t. This system has worked out very well for us, and we hope for our readers. We send free copies to lots of women, many of whom later send us money, when their circumstances make it possible. Other women have supported us over the years with generous contributions.

We want to use every inch of *LesCon* for our contributors’ work, so we don’t carry advertising. We don’t apply for grants. In ten years of all-volunteer operation, the paper has always paid for itself through subscriptions and bookstore sales. Unfortunately, printing and postage costs have gone up substantially in the last couple of years, and we’re going to have to raise our newsstand price. *LesCon* will now run you \$2 at your local women’s bookstore. We’re also bumping our suggested subscription price to \$8 per year, but our policy remains the same as always — pay what you can. ♦

LESCON CENSORED IN TEXAS!

LesCon recently received a notice from the Mail Systems Coordinators Panel of the Texas Department of Corrections, or TDC, as they call themselves, informing us that Issue #39 “has been reviewed and denied in accordance with Section 3.9 of the TDC Rules and Regulations for the reason(s) checked below.”

Turns out the Department of Corrections didn’t like Barbara Louise’s article “An Alternative to Latex,” about how women can avoid transmitting AIDS to each other. According to the TDC, “A specific factual determination has been made that the publication is detrimental to prisoner’s rehabilitation because it would encourage deviate criminal sexual behavior.” In particular,

“Page 21 contains graphic depiction of women engaging in homosexual activity,” and “qualifies for clipping.”

Great! The state of Texas doesn’t want its women prisoners to have information about how to prevent transmission of AIDS. *LesCon* readers who are so moved might choose to communicate their outrage to the Governor of Texas, a Democrat who ran as a feminist, named Ann Richards.

CALL: (512) 463-2000

WRITE: Office of the Governor
Austin, TX 78711.

Commentary

Three Reasons Why Goddess Religion Is Superior to the Old Stuff

by Sharon Sarles

A friend of mine from the local Unitarian Universalist Church and I were out by the pool getting to know one another while our daughters swam. We discovered that we were both pretty much agnostics after having once been intimately involved in conservative, heartfelt Christianity. We discussed choices, the schools of thought if you will, the positions represented in our own congregation. Harvey is the leading secular humanist. Val is becoming a leader in goddess worship. Our minister claims some background in Buddhism. The local Shaman claims to be Christian. Being women and having left a system of belief in the supernatural, my friend and I felt most pulled between the women's spirituality group on the one hand and the secular humanist group on the other — between goddess worship and rationalism.

I related that I felt the women's group was groping. Few wanted to ally themselves with Wicca, most were turned off by conventional western religion, most wanted something more than scientism or ordinary reality. There is a felt need for spirituality. What should spirituality be? How do we express spirituality in a gathering? So far, we are shy about ritual and are studying Carol Christ's *Laughter of Aphrodite*.

Then my friend say, "I'm leery of it, Goddess seems just like Jesus and God. It's just more supernatural people. I think Jesus was a great teacher and some of his lessons are good for today, but to make him out to be some great supernatural savior isn't for me. It's great to have a female in the pantheon, but isn't it just more of the same, except for gender?"

Her question sparked some exciting thoughts. No, goddess isn't just more of the same for three reasons: 1) Goddess is a monism not a duality; 2) Goddess is not a Lord, who owns, to whom we surrender and 3) Goddess religion shouldn't be involved in worship, but in honor and respect.

While Goddess religion can only loosely be characterized as system, while there is no one codification, no orthodoxy of Goddess religion, there are some common characteristics of Goddess thought. Goddess is closely connected with and primarily manifested in the earth. Indeed, the most common name for the Goddess is Gaia, meaning the whole planetary ecological system of earth. Rituals for goddess worship happen in a circle and are often homegrown. A central fire, four directions, and circle dance are common in many rituals. Ecological concerns are everywhere important in the thinking of goddess "worshippers."

In contrast, in Christianity there are orthodoxies. There have been many codifications. God is the creator who is totally other than the creation and his primary name is YHWH, (which lately has been translated as "being" by process theologians, but they, indeed, have

been castigated as liberals). Clearly, Christianity is not monolithic nor unified, nor do its primary writings, the New Testament, speak with one voice. Nevertheless, the Judeo-Christian system is certainly a supernatural religion with an external savior and a self-denying behavior. While there are other ways of being Christian, they are minority reports. It is a religion of fall, redemption, revelation, and supernaturalism. God is a Lord who takes care of his serfs and demands responsive behaviour in return.

Goddess religion is not western Judeo-Christianity with simply a female anthropomorphism substituted for a male one, firstly because Goddess is a monism not a duality. Christianity is a base a duality. There is the temporal and there is the eternal. There is creation and there is the creator. There is earth and there is heaven. And earth and heaven are very different and at odds with each other. Human beings are fallen and earthly. God is above humans and his activity is necessary for the salvation of humans. Proper behavior after initial salvation is in continued orientation to the supranatural. "To be heavenly minded is life, but to be earthly minded is death." Salvation is depen-

// Goddess religion heals the split between heaven and earth. //

dent on faith and that by grace, by the gracious activity of God. While good works and among them stewardship of the environment are a part of Christian life, they are far down the priority list, far down on the list of what is important to think about.

Majority Christianity is very little different from the Platonic soma-sema dichotomy, that the body is the tomb, bad, and world of the spiritual and mental is good. Indeed, Roman Catholicism, the largest denomination of Christianity, has been characterized as platonism for the masses.

Goddess, in contrast, being identified with the earth itself, is not apart nor in contrast with ordinary reality, with humanness and certainly not with the natural environment. There is only one reality. Thus ordinary reality is not to be shunned for another reality. It is the wonder of what pushed up daffodils that enchants, rather than the revelation brought by the high culture, the conquerors, and the ones who disdain the dirt. In result, then, in dealing with a difficult reality, even though a goddess worshipper may light incense and say some words, the primary way to deal with reality will be with ordinary action. On the other hand, while no responsible minister and many priests would encourage action after prayer, nevertheless the clear feeling is that prayer is more potent than ordinary action. Whether most Christians actually pray with their Presbyterian minister for peace and justice, I do not know. I do know that they typically do no

EVE MEETS LOBOOTH

Dolly
Earthdaughter 91



follow him out into the political action that he enjoins. Goddess religion heals the split between heaven and earth, transmuting spirituality by making by making it much more immanent than any Christianity.

Goddess religion isn't just more of the same not only because it is monistic instead of dualistic, but also because it has no lord. A lord is owed certain respect, certain property, even perhaps the very lives that he takes care of. In return, the Lord is responsible for his serfs. That is how lordship worked. It is from feudalism that we get the word "lord." Christianity has not progressed far from the feudal European. The Roman bishop conducts a vassal service when he inducts his new priests into service. The very structure of the church, to the degree to which it adheres to the Roman Catholic orthodoxy, conforms to feudalism and its inherent hierarchy. The plan perhaps is justifiable if the superiors do indeed keep their responsibilities to their inferiors. The Lord is supposed to take care of his serfs. At any rate, Lordship implies an ownership and a rulership.

But deeper than the social structures of the church is the underlying theology. As long God is something radically other than his creation, you have an inherent hierarchy. If that higher being then demands something: like worship, lives as gifts, and especially if that god is a jealous god, you have coercion. If that god has earthly emissaries who are building his kingdom on earth, you will inevitably end up having some (if not necessarily all) coercive social systems. If you have a dualism of natural and supranatural mediated by some humans, those humans have the advantage by their gatekeeping priority.

Even leaving aside the possibility of coercive social systems, look at the mildest, most protestant form of the results of Lordship. Yes, each person is invited into a personal relationship with this Lord. Each person is told that to be saved, to not be lost eternally, one must surrender all, must give her/his life over to God, must put Jesus on the throne, making Jesus the center and criterion of each decision in that person's life. Now if this Jesus is something totally other than the person's own conscience and reason, and if this Jesus must be revealed, who mediates Jesus?

Thomas Jefferson said that each religion implies a political stance. Gandhi said anyone who doesn't see this knows nothing of religion. So we have these people who have given up their very lives and decision-making power and will be told what to do. Who will teach them? And what do the teachers teach?

Leaving aside the vagaries of human nature and the will to power among teachers, at basis, in essence, what is this desire to surrender all? What result comes from giving self away? Is this a healthy psychological dynamic, to want to, or even to be willing for the greatest good in the world to give your own self, your own desire, your own self-centeredness away? Could it be a reasonable unhappiness with the way things have been and so a willingness to let someone brighter run the show? Or is it some innate irresponsibility, some wish to get out of having the ethical responsibility of decision-making, the existential angst of charting space and values? Or is it pure co-dependency?

In contrast, the goddess adherent feels a taking on of personal power. To name the ultimate in a feminine word is itself empowering to women. Nor does the adherent ever offer herself or her decision-making capabilities to any other. The direction she seeks is in her own heart, mind, intuition and conscience, for it is in her heart that her mother speaks.

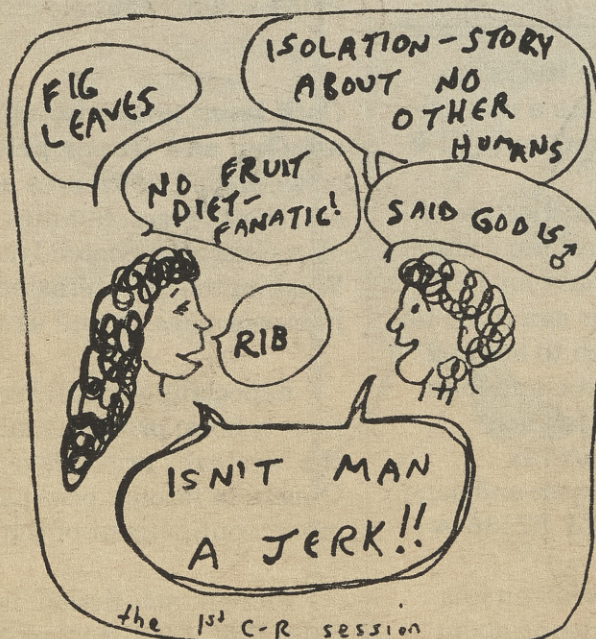
I was blessed with a hearing of a new song written by Debbie Dee. She sang it for me at Chapel Hill in Kerrville. The title of the song is "The Mad Woman." The words that I remember are, "I don't have to give my mother my life, for she doesn't ask it of me, for Mother has her own." Another place in her song she mentions that God could not look upon Jesus as Jesus was on the cross, but that her mother always stood by her in her worst pain. Dee correctly characterized the new goddess religion as one without a heteronomy, without a lordship, hierarchalism, and without a giving away of the self.

In social organizations, too, one can see the unhierarchical-ness of the goddess religion. Where Christians gather in rows with the leaders facing the congregation, goddess adherents always form a circle and the leader (if there is one), is part of the circle. Although she may step forward to light a candle or something, it is just as likely that an-

// (In Christianity) we have these people who have given up their very lives and decision-making power and will be told what to do. Who will teach them? And what do the teachers teach? //

other participant will do so, too. While I have not been to many such circles, and while the women's group that I participate in is particularly experimental, nevertheless I believe this is the practice. I do know that the spiral dance is practiced in many places and the form is also circular rather than linear or hierarchical. Much has been written about female sharing of information and power and how this is more circular than the male pyramid power structure.

continued on next page



Commentary

Goddess Religion continued from previous page

At base, then goddess is not a Queen, a ruler. Males who feel patriarchy manifest their own projections. In modern literature, women have repeatedly distinguished between power over and power to. Goddess is not about rulership; Lordship is. I remember words from our studies instead, about goddess is me and I am the goddess, thus identifying the Goddess concept as an immanent one. Goddess is not the same old heteronomy as the old lordship. In contrast to the giving up of power by the suppliant, the honorer is herself empowered.

Goddess religion is not just the same old stuff not only because it is a monism rather than a dualism and because it is not lordship but also because it is not worship. Lights went on for me about this as I was listening to a Native American explain to us about the sacred fire. He gave us instructions, knowing that we white people don't learn well by watching, but rather by people telling us things. Almost as an afterthought, he said, "Oh, and I don't mean that we worship the water. I don't mean to ask you to worship Grandmother Water. We are not worshipping. We are honoring. We are respecting. We are considering how water is important in our lives. We are remembering how we should be in relationship with the water. We get our lives back in balance with the sacred fire." More like honor and respect and less like worship.

I cannot speak definitively about how goddess religion is carried on, but I will say this, as a dabbler in goddess ritual and as a serious thinker: goddess worship could and should be more like honor and respect and less like worship. We in our culture have very little depth and understanding about honor and worship. We know almost nothing about right relationship. We are out of right relationship with our environment. In fact, this disjointedness with both fellows and environment being so obvious is one of the main causes of goddess worship being so powerfully popular.

The connection between dominion of the earth, of people, the badness of earth and of people, and the coercion of environment and culture, has been well documented. Goddess religion is fundamentally different because it is monistic, having only one reality, disallowing a bifurcation of the two, disowning one and valuing the other. Goddess religion is not about lordship, rulership and heteronomy, that is the ordering of those two realms bifurcated from the one reality. And goddess religion does not require worship, rather it is about considering, honoring and healing right relationship to ultimate reality, which is most clearly seen in the natural world around us.

An ancillary question to these considerations arises. If it is significantly different from the old god religion, is it as satisfying? Although I gave away myself, I got in return a feeling of participating in ultimate power. "What can goddess religion offer me?" asks the American religion trekker. Goddess religion offers a slightly more mundane reality. But look, dear reader, how mundane is reality? If the molecules of our human body have elements that could have only come about by the explosion of some distant star, is that not some transcendence? That we grow, much like the daffodil that pushes up through the frosty spring ground, is that not some miracle? That we in our little talks by pools can grasp at knowing something of the ultimate ethical reality, is that not part of the best power? ♦

Announcements

Sinister Wisdom has just published #47 *Tellin' It Like It Tis'*, a special issue produced by a collective of women of color. It's a rich collection of fiction, art, photographs, poetry and essays. Don't miss it! ♦

The Labrys Project in Albuquerque, New Mexico is, "a collective of Lesbian incest survivors who... have realized that the Lesbian community needs some incest survivor support services *specifically for Lesbians*." They hope to buy or lease a building where lesbians can come to heal and where they can apply their "grassroots approach to healing, an approach which is community-based, wholistic, realistic and feminist." They will fund the project without government assistance. They'd like donations and suggestions. You can make your tax-deductible contribution to New Mexico REEF/Labrys Project and send them to Labrys Project, PO Box 40097, Albuquerque, NM 87196. ♦

Weenie-Toons from Laugh Lines Press. Editor Roz Warren has just published *Weenie-Toons*, a collection of women's cartoons about penises. Look for a number of women who've contributed to *LesCon* over the years, including Alison Bechdel, Nikki Gosch, Andrea Natalie and Dianne Reum. \$5 to Roz Warren, Box 259, Bala Cynwyd, PA. ♦

Calls for Submissions:

Black Lesbian Culture Book: Terri Jewell, who has often written for *LesCon* over the years seeks past and present photographs, names, organizations, anecdotes and rumors, song titles and lyrics, publications, notes on personal style, lovemaking tips, recipes, black and white artwork, references, herstory and sheroes, conferences, *anything* by, about, for Black Lesbians. Also looking for fund-raising ideas. Contact Terri Jewell, PO Box 23154, Lansing, MI 48909, or call (517) 485-3500 any time. ♦

Anthology about brother-sister incest. Looking for writings, drawings and works on paper by women of our brothers' inability to keep their hands and organs away from us. Send artwork, poems or stories to Risa Shaw, PO Box 5723, Takoma Park, MD 20913-0723. ♦

Something to say about butchness in women? Desperately seeking Butchness! Two editors seek sympathetic writers and artists for literary bonding in anthology. Writers and artists should either like butch women or be butch themselves. Need not be lesbian to submit. Need not be female to submit. Deadline: 9/15/92. Send SASE to DAGGER, PO Box 2587, Berkeley, CA 94702. ♦

Hag Rag Intergalactic Lesbian Feminist Press presents a Two-Volume Journey Into the Issues of Race and Class. The editors write, "Lesbians have both the potential and the responsibility to create hope in our own lives — by countering the cominance and oppression around us, by working to transform the racism, anti-semitism, classism, ableism, sizeism and ageism that permeate all of our lives and that continue to splinter and divide lesbian communities, to make alliances amongst our communities meaningless or impossible."

Deadline for the first issue, *Anti-Oppression I: Lesbians and Class*, has already passed, but the editors are still looking for material for *Anti-Oppression II: Lesbians and Race*. They ask, "How did the human race get divided into categories? Are these categories racist and used to divide us from one another? How can and do lesbians practice anti-racism? What skills and tactics have been helpful for you in surviving and thriving in the day-to-day reality of racism."

Deadline is October 1, 1992. Send written work (on paper or tape) or art work to Hag Rag, PO Box 1171, Madison, WI 53701. ♦

Anthology of Lesbian Letters: Requesting submission of letters by Lesbians for anthology, fictional or factual on any topic. Humor, love, politics, anger, etc. Let's save ourselves for posterity! Include bio and SASE. Deadline: 10/15/92. Wyrda, PO Box 214, Day's Creek, OR 97429. ♦

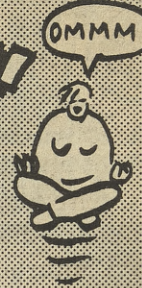
Sinister Wisdom, a journal for the lesbian imagination in the arts and politics, seeks work for #49 *The Lesbian Body* focusing on development and reclamation of dyke body politics and analysis (Deadline: October 5, 1992) and #50 *Lesbian Ethics* exploring ethics and community, codes, challenges, responsibility (Deadline: February 1, 1993). Send two copies with SASE or SASE for more information to PO Box 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703. ♦

Cold Iron, an anthology of writing and art by and about Lesbian, Gay and Queer prisoners: seeking submissions. Any work that reflects the experiences and concerns of Gay, Lesbian or Queer prisoners, their lovers, families or friends will be considered. Editor Lin Elliot, a Cherokee/Scotch Irish prisoner incarcerated at Clallam Bay, Washington, is interested in collaborations between prisoners and non-prisoners as well as individual submissions.

Especially sought: Work about juvenile detention centers and reform schools; problems facing transsexuals in prisons; homophobia in the "system"; prison lovers; the treatment of Gays, Lesbians and Queers in foreign prisons; mental patients and involuntary confinement; confinement of the elderly.

Fiction, non-fiction, letters, 3000 word maximum. *Cold Iron*, c/o John Fall, 1457-B 22nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98122. ♦

"THE PERSONAL IS TRANSCENDENTAL"



LIFE CAN BE MUNDANE.

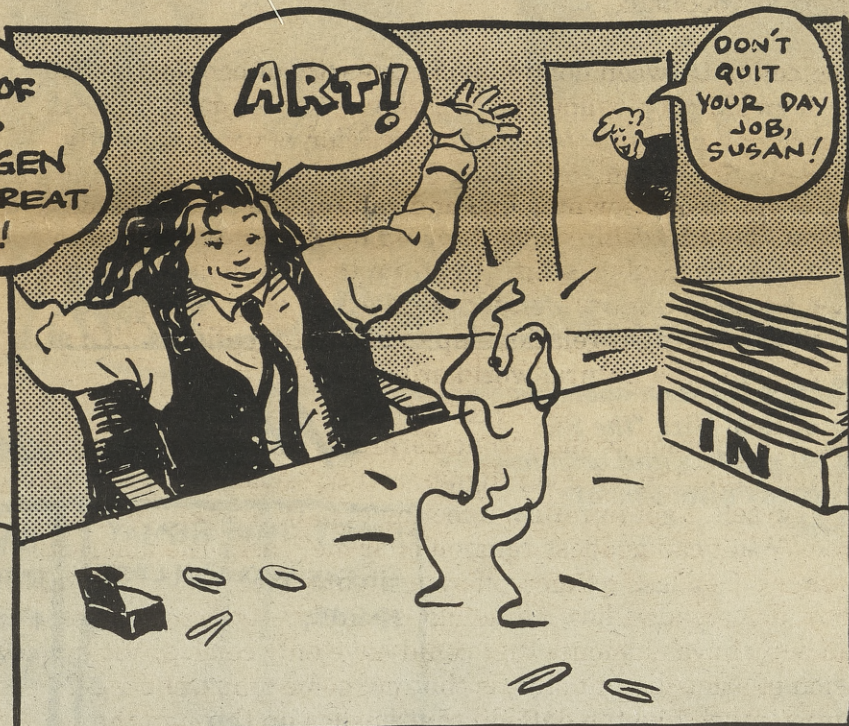
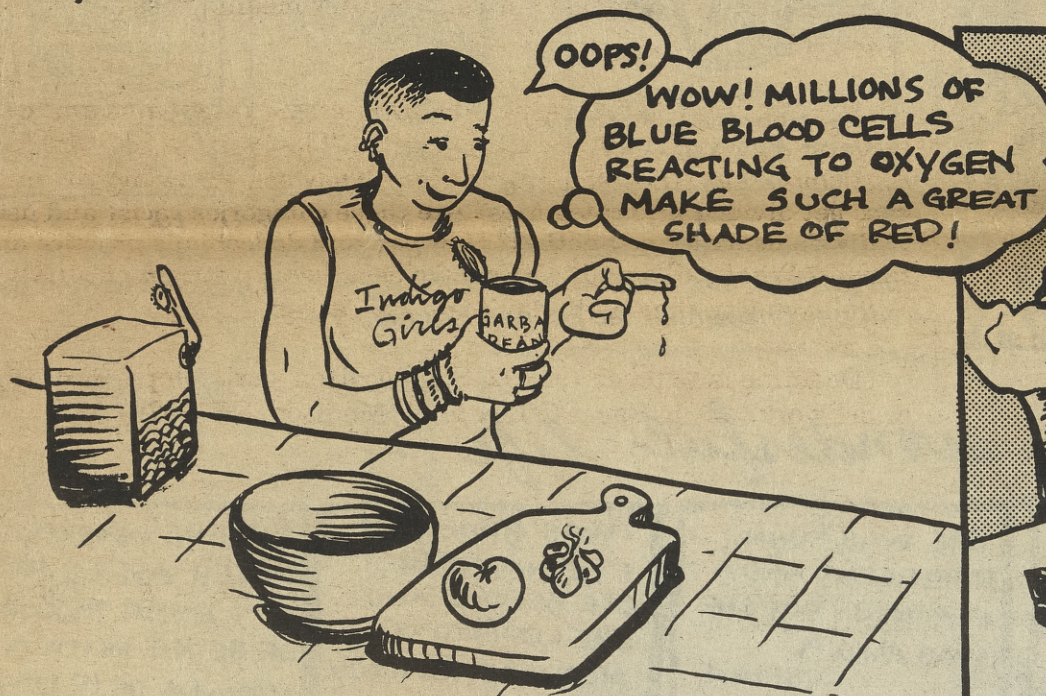


ROUTINE SNEAKS UP ON YOU AND PARALYZES YOUR CREATIVITY...

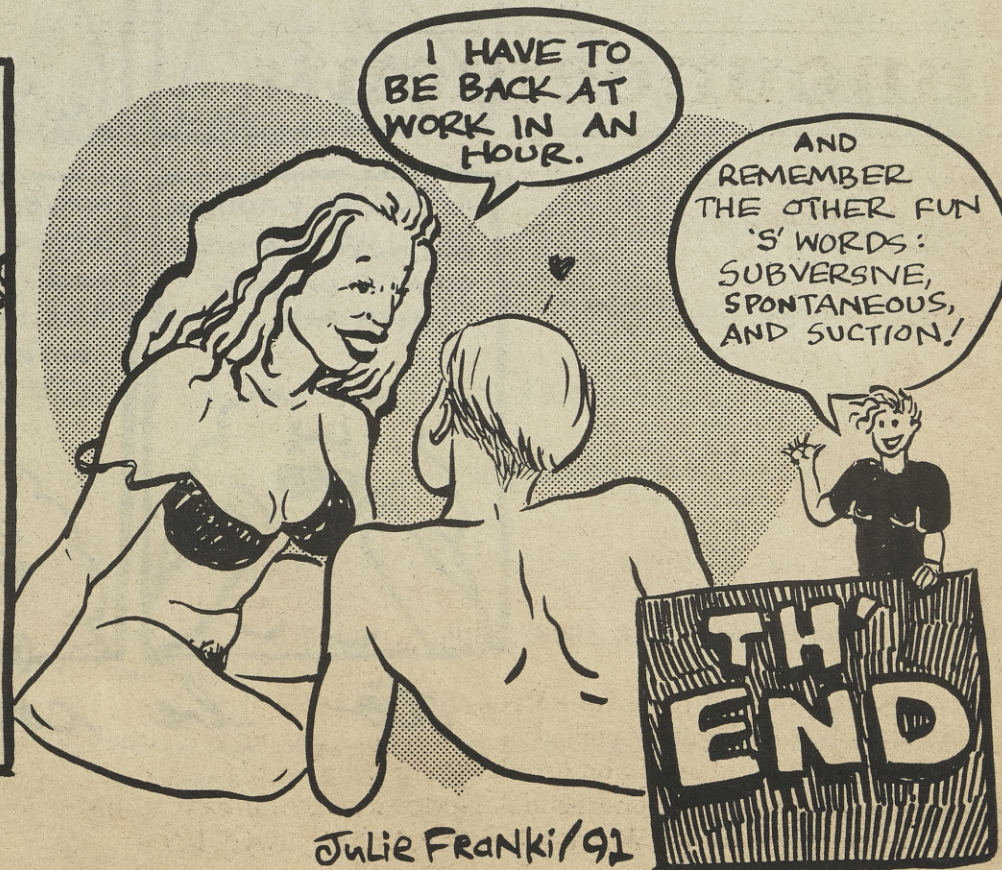
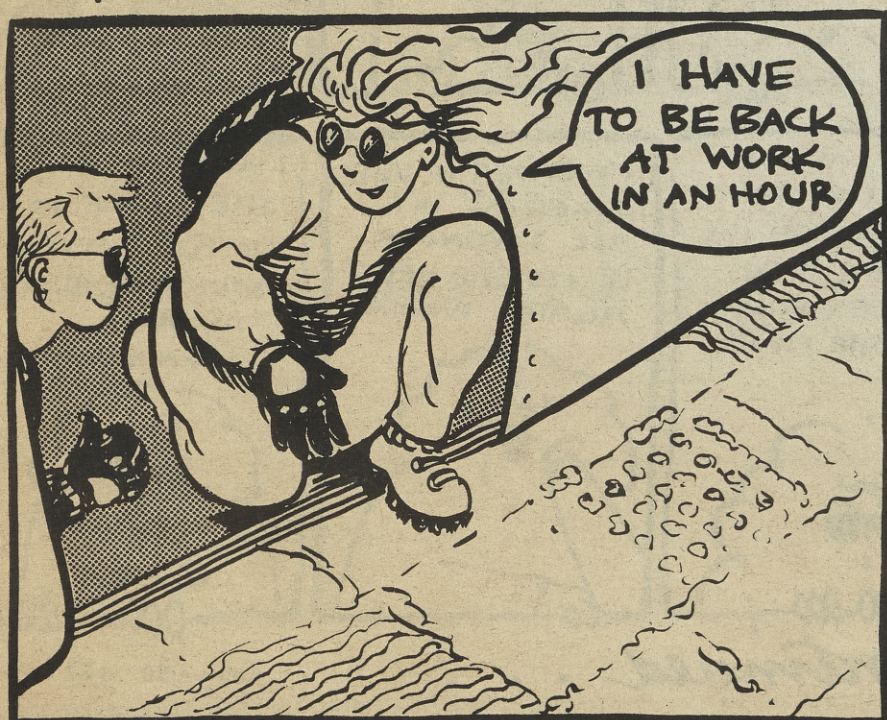
CREATIVE RIGORMORTIS



SO, TO ADD QUALITY, THERE ARE SUBTLE WAYS TO TRANSCEND:



OR, FOR TRULY PROFOUND ESCAPE:



Cartoonist Julie Franki is a native Texan who earns her living painting greeting cards in Kansas City.

Julie Franki/91

QUEER, with CHILDREN (#2)

©1991 by Angela Borage



Angela Borage (cartoon above) is the editor of Real Girl, "the Sex Comik of all genders and orientations... by cartoonists who are good in bed."



Kathleen DeBold (KET), the artist whose cartoons appear on the cover, on page 12, and above draws "WordGaymes" in gay and lesbian publications throughout the US and Canada.

It's a wonderful life...

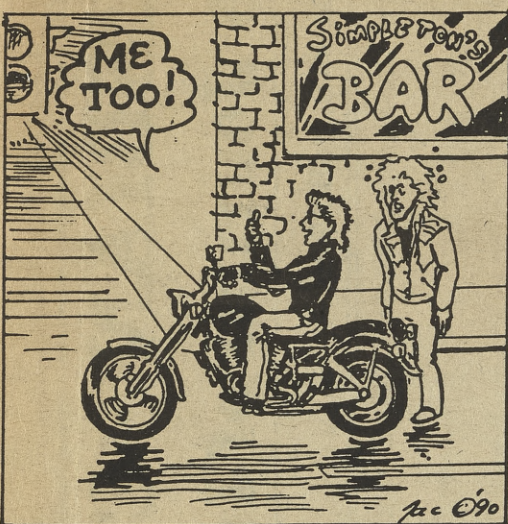
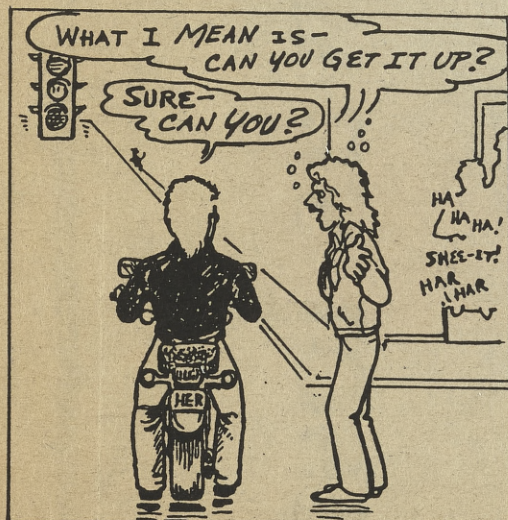


to be continued...

KIRKLAND '91 ©

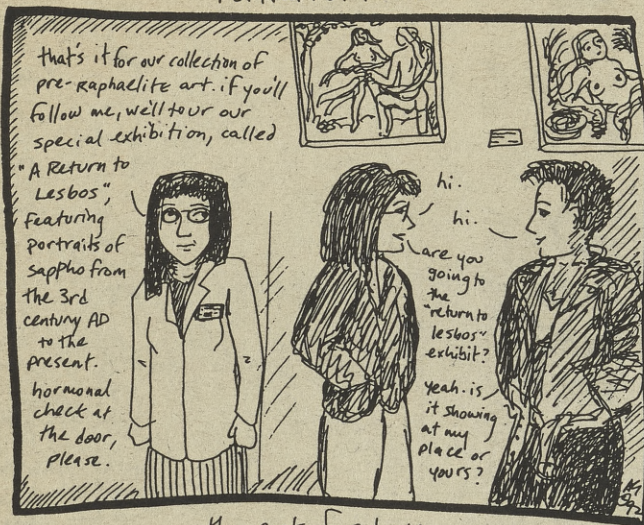
Deborah Kirkland

ASSHOLE ALERT #853



Jacki Randall is a San Francisco artist/writer/musician.

Portrait of Panic



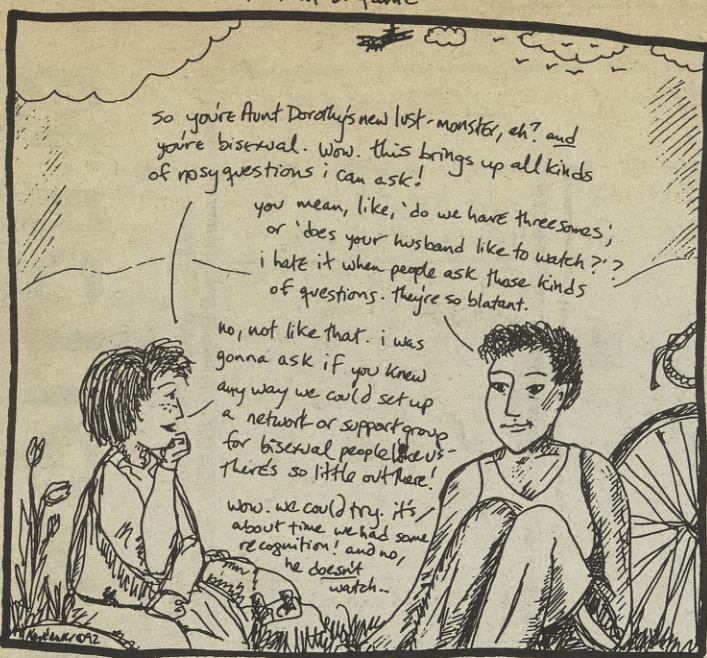
the art of seduction.

Portrait of Panic



an artful pick-up.

Portrait of Panic



telling questions...

Portrait of Panic



a Bug in The system...

Portrait of Panic



bi any means necessary...



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☐ Yes, I have checked to make sure my printing on this form is readable (Thanks!)

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☐ I can't send money now, but I do want to subscribe.

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☐ Please send a free sample copy of the next issue to the women on the enclosed list.

In 1492 —

Columbus was lost...

After 500 years of conquest, rape
and greed, we're all pretty lost.

In 1992 —

We can't afford to be lost any longer.

It's time to fight back
as if our lives depended on it.
They do.

Feminist Thoughtworks Poster #3, brought to you by Lesbian Contradiction.
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LESBIAN • CONTRADICTION

A Journal of Irreverent Feminism

Issue #40, Fall 1992

\$2.00

By and for Women

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"I guess we should have paid more attention to
what the Supreme Court was up to."

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AMY BLAKE,
JAN ADAMS
write on the
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ALSO:

MORE ON
SEX & GENDER

A LATINA'S
THOUGHTS ON
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LOTS OF
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EXTRA! LESCON CENSORED IN TEXAS! See page 13

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